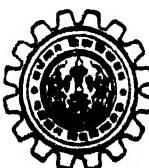


**INDIAN
SOCIOLOGY**

The Role Of

**BENOY KUMAR
SARKAR**

SWAPAN KUMAR BHATTACHARYYA



UNIVERSITY OF BURDWAN



BENOY KUMAR SARKAR

Born : Maldah

26 December 1887

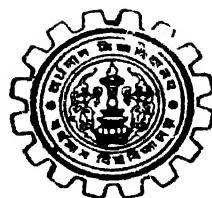
Died

Washington D. C.

24 November 1949

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**THE UNIVERSITY OF BURDWAN
BURDWAN**

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[1100 Copies]

DEDICATED

to the memory of

my paternal grandfather

SASANKASEKHAR BHATTACHARJEE

of Magura, Jessore

LAWYER AND EDUCATIONIST

and

my maternal grandfather

HEMCHANDRA CHAKRAVARTTY

of Maichpara (Vikrampur), Dacca

PANDIT AND KAVIRAJ

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

‘অন্যদেশে মৃত্যুর পর প্রিয়জনকে সমাহিত করিয়া তাহার অবশেষ যথাসাধ্য রক্ষার চেষ্টা করে, ভারতবর্ষে প্রিয়জনকে চিতায় দণ্ড করিয়া তাহার চিহ্নমাত্র রাখে না। তাহার জন্মকোষ্ঠী পর্যন্ত গঙ্গাজলে বিসর্জন দেয়।

ভারতবর্ষের পক্ষে ভারতবর্ষ অপেক্ষা প্রিয়তর আর কিছু ছিল না। অতীত ভারতবর্ষের সংগৃহ ধন সম্মদ্যাই বর্তমান ভারতবর্ষ লাভ করিয়াছে : কিন্তু তাহার জন্মকোষ্ঠী ও জীবনের কাহিনী ভূলিয়া গিয়াছে।

অন্যদেশে যাহাকে ইতিহাস বলে, এদেশে তাহা নাই। অতীতের তত্ত্ব এদেশে রাখিতে চাহে না।’ (শ্রীযুক্ত রামেন্দ্র সন্দেশ গ্রন্থে—ভূমিকা : ঐতিহাসিক প্রবন্ধ—শ্রী বিনয় কুমার সরকার : কলিকাতা—১৯১২)

“In other countries after the demise of a dear one his body is buried and his memories or relics are preserved with utmost care. In India the bodies of the deceased, however dear they may be to their relatives, are consigned to fire and no trace of the dead is left behind, even their horoscopes are thrown into the Ganges.

To India nothing was dearer than India herself. India of today has inherited all the wealth accumulated in India of the past but has forgotten the account of her birth, and her life story.

What is called history in other lands is not known in this country. This country does not like to preserve the records of the past.” (Foreword by Ramendra Sundar Trivedi to Sarkar, 1912.)

These lines were written by Ramendra Sundar Trivedi in the Foreword to a book by Benoy Kumar Sarkar. The name of the book was *Aitihasik Prabandha* (Historical Essays or Essays on History) and it dealt with how to study history. It is an irony of history that the words apply so effectively to the fate of the works by Benoy Kumar Sarkar. Benoy Kumar Sarkar wrote prolifically on social and sociological problems. He was a pioneer in acquiring familiarity with the works of the masters of

sociology in the west and getting his countrymen acquainted with their contribution (Sarkar, 1928-29). A versatile scholar enjoying complete mastery over French, German and Italian languages, in addition to English, he read the works of the scholars in Germany, France and Italy in original. He had much earlier than any other in this country discussed, rather, critically interpreted these works to the students of social sciences in the country. His relation with scholars like Sorokin was one of "mutual admiration." He had one time been a correspondent to the *American Sociological Review*. He was a member of many international associations which were devoted to sociological, demographic, and economic studies.

Benoy Kumar Sarkar was "perhaps the only one to react to Weber even before the English translations of Weber's works had become available" (Gupta, 1974 : 22). One finds in him "in embryonic form almost all the ingredients of subsequent sophisticated sociological studies" (*Ibid*) of the Indian society and tradition. He thought of a sociology of and for self-reliance of the Bengalis and Indians. He inspired a batch of Bengalis to undertake studies in matters relating to sociology. Further, Benoy Kumar Sarkar was very highly esteemed by his countrymen for his patriotic zeal and his involvement in nation-building activities. He enthused them with inspiring messages for a resurgent India. He envisioned a glorious future of India, rather the East, that was emerging from centuries-old bondage of foreign domination. This India or this East of a completely new genre was painted in most brilliant colours by Sarkar and he called upon every one including the youth to realize the portrait in reality (see Sarkar, 1938 and Sarkar, 1939 a). Little wonder, then, that Sarkar would win the hearts of scores of youngmen in India of his time. A piece of evidence of enchantment of the Indian youth with Sarkar is furnished in the booklet by Dilip Malakar, a Bengalee youngman of 1949 and, currently a journalist. Malakar writes that in his boyhood he heard from his Guru stories about "Benoy Sarkar's cultural educational and patriotic activities during the glorious revolution (1905-14) as well as travels in Eur-America, China, Japan and Egypt and

researches and investigations in publications like *Chinese Religion through Hindu Eyes*, *The Political Institutions and Theories of Hindus*, *The Futurism of Young Asia and Vartaman Jagat* (Modern World, 13 Vols. during 1914-25)' (Malakar, 1949 : Dedication page). In genuine admiration for Sarkar, Malakar prepared and brought out in print "a chronological account of the books, brochures, notes and reports on topics of political science and sociology published by Benoy Sarkar since his association with Calcutta University in February 1926. It furnishes also his contacts with villages and towns in India as well as with foreign countries through lectures, publications and membership on academic and social institutions, and indicates thereby some of the avenues through which Indian and world developments have been brought into contact with each other" (ibid : 1). Malakar's short piece runs through 46 printed pages, though Sarkar's publications and other activities in the fields of economics and commerce have been excluded by Malakar on the ground that a list of publications in economics is found elsewhere.

Sarkar's appeal was not confined to the youth only ; his seminal mind and manifold activities were admired by more mature minds as well. The following excerpt bears testimony to that :

“বঙ্গীয় সমাজবিজ্ঞান পরিষদের প্রতিষ্ঠাতা

অধ্যাপক বিনয়কুমার সরকার

বন্ধু-বরেষ—

সে আজ ৩৬ বৎসর পূর্বে'কার কথা । তামরা উভয়েই তখন বিদ্যার্থী^১ তরুণ যুবক,—‘ডন সোসাইটি’র সদস্য । বাঙলার নীরব কর্মঘোগী, সাধকশ্রেষ্ঠ আচার্য সতীশচন্দ্র মুখোপাধ্যায় ঐ সোসাইটি প্রার্তিষ্ঠা করিয়াছিলেন । আচার্য সতীশচন্দ্র এই ‘ডন সোসাইটি’র মধ্য দিয়াই স্বদেশী আন্দোলন তথা জাতীয় শিক্ষা আন্দোলনের গোড়াপস্তন করেন । স্বদেশীযুগের উষার তিনিই আবাহন করেন ।... তরুণ বাঙলার মনে জাতীয়তা ও স্বাদেশিকতার উদ্বোধন করিবার জন্য আচার্য সতীশচন্দ্র যে অক্রান্ত সাধনা করিয়াছিলেন, আজ অনেকেই হয়ত তাহা ভুলিয়া গিয়াছেন । কিন্তু সতাকার সাধনা কখনও ব্যথ^২ হয় না । ‘ডন সোসাইটি’র দেশসেবার পাঠশালায় যাহাদের হাতেখড়ি হইয়াছিল, আজ বাঙলার কর্মজীবনের নানা বিভাগে তাঁহাদের অনেককেই জাতিগঠনের বৃত উদ্ঘাপন

করিতে দৰ্শিতোছি। আপনি তঁহাদেরই প্রধান একজন।...আপনি আজ
দেশবিখ্যাত পৰ্ণত, আমি একজন অখ্যাত সাংবাদিক। তবু এই গ্ৰন্থ সেই
অতীতের কথা মনে কৰিয়া শৃঙ্খলা ও প্ৰীতিৰ নিদৰ্শন স্বরূপে আপনার হস্তে
অপৰ্ণ কৰিতে সাহসী হইলাম। ইতি—

ভবদীৱ

১০ই নবেম্বৰ, ১৯৪০

“গ্ৰীষ্মফুলকুমাৰ সৱকাৰ”

The excerpt rendered in English stands as follows :

“To

Professor Benoy Kumar Sarkar
The Founder of Bangiya Samaj Vigyan Parishat
and
Beloved Friend

Both of us were then young—both of us were members of the ‘Dawn Society’. Satish Chandra Mukhopadhyay, the silent Karma-Yogin (worker-worshipper) of Bengal, the foremost saint and great teacher, was the founder of the ‘Society’. Acharya Satishchandra started the Swadeshi Movement as well as the National Education Movement through this ‘Dawn Society.’ It was he who invoked the dawn of the Swadeshi age...Many have in these days forgotten the untiring efforts of Satish chandra in awakening the spirit of nationalism and patriotism in the hearts of young Bengal. But true and sincere penance is never lost. Many of those who are found now-a-days pursuing the mission of nation-building in different fields of activities in Bengal had been initiated into the vow of service to their country in the precincts of the ‘Dawn Society.’ You are in the forefront amongst them....Today you are a scholar known all over the country and I am a little known journalist. But the memory of those days has emboldened me to offer this work of mine to you as a token of love and respect.

Truly yours

The 10th November, 1940

Sri Prafulla Kumar Sarkar.”

The lines above are taken from the page of dedication of the book, *Kshayishnu Hindu* (ক্ষয়িষ্ণু হিন্দু—The Decadent Hindus), by Prafulla Kumar Sarkar (1963). Prafulla Kumar was a founder and the first editor of the *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, the famous nationalist daily in Bengalee. Every page of *Kshayishnu Hindu* bears the evidence of Prafulla Kumar's incisive analysis of many of the problems plaguing the Hindu social order in his time and his mature judgement thereon. Prafulla Kumar's unstinting admiration for Sarkar's patriotism and erudition is significant and, what is more significant, Prafulla Kumar was not the solitary admirer of Sarkar. Quoting at length from the panegyrics by Prafulla Kumar Sarkar and Dilip Malakar may be considered unnecessary and avoidable wastage of space. But these are two good samples chosen at random from the stream of encomium Sarkar received in his lifetime from his countrymen, young and old alike.

A very brief but more or less correct appreciation of the significance of Sarkar's work in the growth of sociology in India is offered in the following observation by Yogendra Singh : "Indian sociology, which I would say starts with B. N. Seal, was a [n] intellectual reaction to all three [western] interpretations [—orientalist, evangelical, utilitarian-administrative—of the Indian reality]. But it was primarily to the evangelical, interpretations and, to some extent, to the interpretations of Indian society offered by western sociologists and anthropologists to which it directly responded. Thus sociology starts as a cognitive response to the models that western social scientists were developing on Indian society. B. K. Sarkar reacted to the Max Weberian interpretation of Hinduism, while Seal reacted to the Morganian and other anthropological interpretations of India on an evolutionary scheme. But in this process, these early Indian thinkers felt the need also to reinterpret the Indian tradition. In fact this tradition consciousness is a very important aspect of the sociology of the 1920's and 30's" (Singh 1979 : 108-109 ; parentheses added).

Sarkar was, one may justifiably say, the most prominent among the pioneers in Indian sociology to have made a ceaseless

effort towards this reinterpretation of Indian tradition. He launched a vigorous attack on the interpretations offered by indologists like Max Müller and sociologists like Max Weber and forwarded a thoroughly different interpretation of this tradition. His efforts in this direction are something more than of merely historical interest. Sarkar's interpretation of Indian tradition merits serious attention of the Indian sociologists of recent times. For, the "systems of 'social structure' and 'tradition' cover the entire gamut of Indian social phenomena and its realities. Modernization in these systems begins either from the emergent and endogenous sources, or through contact with forces outside the systems. These two bases of the initiation of social change should be analysed both at the levels of social structures and traditions" (Singh, 1973 : vi).

Sarkar wrote volumes in economics and economic problems and his views were quite unorthodox. He wrote on history and science of education. He essayed long treatises on political insitutions and political theory as well as problems. During his lifetime Sarkar earned such a popularity with his audience as his admirers brought out two big-sized compendia of his thoughts and ideas (Mukhopadhyay and others, 1944 ; Dass (ed), 1940) and a number of brochures admiring his ideas. The publishers and translators of his books wrote long notes extolling his manifold scholarly activities and his many-sided scholarship. After his demise his friends and admirers wrote obituaries full of veneration. And then Sarkar passed into oblivion so much so that even the University of Calcutta which was Sarkar's alma mater and where Sarkar made the beginning of "Comparative Sociology" in this country following the lead of Brajendranath Seal has shelved his works in the dusty stacks placed in unvisited corners of its library.

II

The neglect of Sarkar's sociological works by the Indian students of sociology is unjustified. Through *The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology* and other works Sarkar "sought to do for India what Weber had done for the west" (Gupta,

1974 : 23). Sarkar repudiated Weber's picture of the other-worldliness of the Indians and their escapism and stagnation.

Sarkar talked of making demographic studies more meaningful by relating them to the sociology of population. Sarkar started comparative studies of the religious systems of different countries. He made a sociological study of the folklife, which was perhaps first of its kind in the country. He attempted a sociological interpretation of art and literature. He gave suggestions from which a well-ordered sociological interpretation of caste could be constructed. His interpretation of caste dynamics in the twenties and thirties foreshadowed many 'original' explanations of the phenomenon, that became available in this country only in the sixties and seventies. And he sincerely tried to develop a sociological theory of progress. With pioneering contributions to the field of sociology Sarkar is only passingly referred to in sociological parlours in India. (Ghurye, 1956 ; Mukherjee, R. K. 1973, Srinivas and Panini, 1973). Sarkar did much for the development of a sociological awareness among his pupils enchanted with his erudition in the Calcutta University and his admirers outside the walls of the University. And Sarkar has been completely forgotten by the Bengalee students of sociology. And it is no wonder those outside Bengal would forget him. Recently a certain interest in his contributions to social sciences is being evinced (Gupta, 1974 ; Mukhopadhyay, 1974 ; Mukherjee, 1977 ; Banerjee, 1979 ; Bhattacharyya, 1979). A full-scale study is still lacking. This work is presented as a step towards the fulfilment of the requirement for such a work.

III

Why is it that Sarkar who kept his pupils and other admirers under charismatic spell came to be greeted with utter non-mention ? One reason perhaps may be the proverbial callousness of the Indians regarding systematic preservation of the records of the ideas and events of the past. Moreover, Sarker wrote and taught in colonial India where sociology was yet to become "an established discipline". "...while economics and political

science had firmly established themselves as academic disciplines in our country before 1947, sociology had not done so. The ‘resistance’ to sociology which our universities displayed in the pre-independence years is a matter worthy of investigation” (U.G.C., 1966 : 5). In fact, Sarkar himself was a teacher in the Department of Economics in Calcutta University. Sarkar retired from the position of the Professor and Head of the Department of Economics of Calcutta University at the end of his career. Calcutta University which, as it is claimed in certain quarters (Dutt Gupta, 1972), was the pioneer among the Indian universities in offering courses in sociology (as part of courses in Philosophy and Political Economy or Economics and Politics), was the last of the first three universities of India to start a department of sociology (Madras University started later than many other universities in India. Bombay University was, of course, the first Indian University to have started an independent department of sociology). Departments of Sociology in West Bengal are late starters. A scientist lives through the discussion of his works. There was not much scope, it is pleaded, in the absence of adequate institutional facilities for studying Sarkar’s sociological ideas.

Then, Sarkar was not very good at systematically presenting his ideas and pursuing any one field of inquiry. Sarkar’s many-sided scholarship constantly took him from one field of inquiry to another. His amazingly wide range of interests stood in the way of the development of a tightly-knit conceptual scheme in sociology. Then again Sarkar’s style of writing was discursive.

He wrote on varied topics and the boundaries between diverse disciplines tended to get blurred. The fact should not, however, it is submitted, be taken for what is called interdisciplinary approach. The term ‘interdisciplinary’ suggests the existence and consciousness of specific disciplines, some kind of division of labour between one subject and another, and, then, it calls for give-and-take among various subjects. A reader of Sarkar’s writings sometimes feels puzzled with the pace with which Sarkar crossed the rubicon separating scientific

disciplines from the flight of speculation or poetic imagination. At a late stage Sarkar came to appreciate the need for demarcating the boundaries of the specialism of sociology. But he could not successfully pursue the task. Readers of Sarkar's works face an uphill task in systematizing his views.

The most serious reason behind the absence of any discussion of Sarkar's ideas lies in the tendency of Sarkar's pupils and disciples to almost deify him. The splendour of Sarkar's genius, his love for his pupils, the extra-ordinary way in which he communicated his ideas to his audience, the way he made his audience think anew on problems they accepted to have been settled turned 'Sarkar' into a legend in his life-time. And Sarkar shed too long a shadow on the minds of his students and friends. Their view of Sarkar's activities and ideas became affected. The strong attachment, rather, devotion, they developed towards Sarkar, never allowed a 'free' discussion of his ideas. Whatever was said by Sarkar is accepted by these people to be sacrosanct. Sarkar's ideas became too sacred to be profaned by the scrutiny of logic.

Whenever Sarkar is mentioned, if he is mentioned at all, encomium is ritually offered to him, and a ritual ends as a veritable ritual showing no farther way. And this disturbing feature is noted in relation to other Indian sociologists as well. It is not correct that Sarkar's ideas were not at all discussed. Sarkar's followers and admirers brought out, as it has already been pointed out, a few volumes depicting his ideas during his life-time, e. g., the work edited by Dass (1940), the one edited by Mukhopadhyaya (1944), and also after his demise, e. g., the short treatise by Mukhopadhyaya (1958, with an introduction by Bhupendra Nath Dutt). But all these give an impression of an uncritical acceptance of Sarkar's ideas by his followers, nay, a worshipful attitude of the latter towards Sarkar. That is, the lack of a critical attitude is very much pronounced in these works. This fact blocks the way of an objective assessment of Sarkar's sociological ideas.

IV

From what has been said above the kind of method followed in the present dissertation can be guessed. A critical evaluation of Sarkar's ideas in sociology will be attempted here. It is very interesting to note that if Sarkar had anything to offer to sociological studies in this country it was his insistence on a critical examination of what the other thinkers said or propagated, though at times his critical vision was shadowed by certain stereotypes which succeeded on occasions in imprisoning his mind and giving rise to contradictions in Sarkar's thought system. Students of sociology of knowledge may enquire as to why Sarkar failed to instil this questioning spirit in his pupils and admirers. We often tend to forget that we learn not only from the greatness but also from the mistakes of our predecessors. The latter have a heuristic value in suggesting new lines of enquiry, in leading us to search for means to overcome the pitfalls which made our predecessors, despite their greatness, stumble.

The body of ideas in any socio-cultural complex is a cumulative one and it is selective too. Ideas and values relevant for one age may lose significance in a different epoch. Hence the student of history of ideas is often advised to meet a thinker in his own terms and is often reminded of the 'precious' suggestion that what appears to be a point of weakness viewed from now and here was the product of the circumstances that were. There is a patent dilemma. On the one hand, one must keep in mind the particular historical conditions in which the specific ideas of a thinker are/were rooted ; on the other hand, one has to accept the reality that if the ideas of a thinker are too narrowly rooted in the circumstances he finds/found himself in, his ideas will lose relevance for different conditions, i. e., for a different epoch. The moorings of ideas in the specific condition are not the only thing to be considered ; the question of transcendence of the present in order to project the future is also there. A student of Sarkar's ideas must solve all these methodological questions. Rather, these questions are pertinent for any attempt at chronicling and objectively evaluating the

ideas of sociologists or social scientists in this country and elsewhere. No definitive statement regarding Sarkar's sociological ideas is attempted here. In the vein of what goes above, a further methodological query is posed. Benoy Kumar Sarkar was a prolific writer and the printed pages recording his ideas are estimated to a figure of 30,000. However, a student of Sarkar's views, ideas and findings need not be deterred by the overwhelming bulk of the volumes he wrote. While his writings in languages other than English and Bengali will elude an English-knowing Bengalee researcher and while the sheer number of pages he wrote and, further, the non-availability of many of the writings may dampen his spirit, he may get a sense of relief that *Sarkar was, fortunately, repetitious*. He himself published English versions of his articles or addresses in Italian, German and French (see Sarkar's preface to *Sociology of Races, Culture and Human Progress*—1939a). Moreover, as certain themes perennially occupied his mind and he propagated them with the zeal of a preacher, these themes recurred in his works, one after another. For example, if one browses the pages of the *Positive Background of Hindu Sociology* (1917 Edition), *The Sociology of Population* (1936), *The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology* (1937 Edition), *Creative India* (1937), one will find the recurrence of quite a number of themes almost in the same language. And he declares his *The Folk Element in Hindu Culture* to be "to a certain extent complementary to the author's *Positive Background of Hindu Sociology*" (Sarkar, 1917-Reprint 1972 : Preface). It has been shown at different places of the publication how *the same idea have been reiterated by Sarkar in different books and articles by him*.

Another fact may be noted in relation to this dissertation. Sarkar has written on economics, politics, history, education, sociology, etc. Here attention has been focussed on his socio-logical works and ideas. The present researcher has tried to present Sarkar's ideas thematically, i. e., each chapter has been devoted to a particular theme. Thus one may notice that a certain chapter has been devoted to a theme on which Sarkar has not produced any major work or to which Sarkar has not

devoted even a small monograph (e.g., caste). As to the choice of the themes, those subjects have been chosen where Sarkar's ideas have appeared to be provocative or interesting even today. That is, the relevance of a particular idea or theme for sociological studies today has been the criterion for its inclusion in this study. A discerning reader may point out that Sarkar's ideas in one or two areas in sociology have not been discussed in this work. Such omissions are sincerely regretted. It may, however, be mentioned that even the major works by Sarkar are very difficult to get, not to speak of his minor works and literally countless articles. Under the circumstances the author did not deem it wise to defer the publication of this treatise on Sarkar for an indefinite point of time. Secondly, since there is no other work of a more or less comprehensive nature on Sarkar's sociological ideas, the choice of the themes and collation of material as well as arrangement of the same have been guided by the author's own understanding. An element of personal choice is almost inevitable in a work of this type. Every care has, of course, been taken so that a more or less comprehensive picture of Sarkar's sociological ideas and his methods of study may be had from this first full-length treatise on Sarkar's sociological ideas.

Sarkar's sociology may be said to be the sociology of positivism of the Hindus, i. e., his sociology has tried to highlight the achievements of the Hindus in the materialistic field. He has provided a strong antithesis of the Weberian view that the Indians are religious-minded and otherworldly in their outlook. An elucidation of Sarkar's thesis and the methods adopted by him to prove that has been presented. Obviously it has relation to religion, folk-religion, art and literature. The way Sarkar has demonstrated 'this-worldliness' of the Indians in all these different spheres has been analysed in this work. And Sarkar's sociology has a guiding principle. Sarkar has through his exemplification of the positive element in Hindu life tried to prove that the Indians are capable of great achievements in this world. Their past was a glorious account of many such great achievements. As a corolary, comes the

point, very favourite with Sarkar, that the Hindu or Indian social system was not a static one. It allowed mobility. Thus Sarkar provides a new perspective on caste. The perspective was definitely novel and bold in Sarkar's own time. And since his study of caste is also related to the contemporary milieu of Sarkar, he comes to examine also how social stratification works in the then prevalent situation. And he notes, of course, how the forces of caste division and class division operate in Indian society. Throughout, Sarkar has sought to show that the Indian social and cultural system has been changing. In almost every study Sarkar has tried to understand the past so that he can better understand the present and also the future. Ramkrishna Mukherjee has correctly pointed out that Sarkar's contribution to sociology consists in a "historico-contemporary futuristic appraisal of Indian (and Asian) social development, dispelling the notion of the 'other worldly' outlook of the orientals and pointing to the need for (a) intensive empirical research to verify the theoretical formulations and the preliminary empirical finding, and (b) the creation of an extensive data base" (Mukherjee, 1977 : 41). It may, however, be noticed that Sarkar himself has not undertaken any empirical work or, more specifically, field work, though he has been the main spring behind the collection of material on an important folk festival of Maldah on which Sarkar's famous sociological study of the folk element in Hindu culture is based. Sarkar has collected evidence from the study of history of India regarding the materialistic attitude of the Hindus and their ability to expand and to accommodate new elements into their way of life and adapting themselves to the changing conditions. Once he succeeds in discerning these elements of positivism and change or progress in the past of the Hindus, he urges that they have the potentialities for change and expansion and success in material life at present and also in the future. If the present is an eclipsed one because of domination by the western powers, the past of India, rather the past of the Orient, was a glorious one and the Indians, the Asians, can chart out their course to a glowing future enriched with immense possibilities for material

success. Hence positivism and progress are the two interlinked terms in the same series. Sarkar's ideas on progress, or social metabolism as contained in *the Sociology of Population* (SP) and *Villages and Towns as Social Patterns* (VTSP) have been examined in detail in the last chapter of this book. Also, many other issues discussed in SP and VTSP have been referred to in this work. Sarkar's sociology is futuristic and infinite progress is a pet theme with Sarkar. It runs through all the different works by him. This treatise has, therefore, been concluded with an examination of Sarkar's ideas on progress.

In presenting the material, the author has been guided by the idea that a work of this kind becomes most useful when the thinker under discussion is allowed to speak for himself. In case of Sarkar, it has been felt all the more necessary to give, above all, exact quotations, since many of Sarkar's works are not easily available today (Quite a few of his works are more than 50 years old). Moreover, in case one quotes brief portions from Sarkar, one runs the risk of being criticised as having quoted Sarkar's statements out of context. Hence in every case the context has been presented in detail and Sarkar's views have been presented in Sarkar's own words, to avoid the risk that the gloss put by the narrator may vitiate the presentation of Sarkar's views. Hence, long quotations from Sarkar's writings, that may cause tedium to the readers, have been offered.

In this way a correct representation of Sarkar's views has been ensured. Since Sarkar's writings are discursive, to impose an order on his thoughts which are valuable nonetheless is a difficult task. And, the presentation of Sarkar's views in his own words is accompanied by a critical assessment by the present author. If the author has erred anywhere, he takes the responsibility for the error and he sincerely apologises for that. But he has preferred the risk of proving erring to the safe course of apotheosizing Sarkar and his ideas.

Sarkar has wanted his students and friends to challenge the accepted ideas. The spirit of Sarkar that emerges from his writings longingly looks for the development of a critical atti-

tude in the minds of the Bengalis, and Indians, and Asians. Sarkar knows that the way to progress is kept open thereby. The present researcher offers his homage to Sarkar, the great pioneer in Indian sociology, through an humble effort for cultivating this critical spirit. He has put Sarkar's ideas to a critical scrutiny by obeying the desire of Sarkar who has been a living example of the art of how to differ, a living embodiment of the spirit of dissent. Sarkar has all through his life desired the growth of scientific spirit which is alias critical spirit. Sarkar's devotees may feel sorry, if Sarkar's ideas are found wanting in many respects, judged from the standard of today. But whatever little understanding of Sarkar's ideas has been gained by this researcher leads him to the conviction that Sarkar himself would have been delighted with that discovery. Sarkar is a scientist. And in science "each of us knows what he has accomplished will be antiquated in ten, twenty, fifty years. That is the fate, to which science is subjected; it is the very *meaning* of scientific work, to which it is devoted in a quite specific sense, as compared with other spheres of culture for which in general the same holds. Every scientific 'fulfilment' raises new 'questions', it *asks* to be 'surpassed' and outdated. Whoever wishes to serve science has to resign himself to this fact. Scientific works certainly can last as 'gratifications' because of their artistic quality, or they may remain important as a means of training. Yet they will be surpassed scientifically—let that be repeated—for it is our common fate and, more, our common goal. We cannot work without hoping that others will advance further than we have in principle, this progress goes on *ad infinitum*" (Max Weber, 1967 : 13^t).

CHAPTER II

HIS LIFE AND HIS MILIEU

Even a cursory look at the biographies of Benoy Kumar Sarkar (Basu, B. D., in *Sarkar*, 1913 : VII—XXX ; Dass, B., in *Sarkar*, 1934 : I—LVIII ; Basu, L. M., in *Sarkar*, 1937 : 1—57 ; Mukherjee, H., 1953 ; Pal, P., 1971) will immediately reveal how varied were his activities and what a brilliant and attractive personality he was. He was not a sociologist merely but an expert in pedagogy, a historian, a political scientist, an economist, a demographer, a sociologist, a journalist—all combined in one. He was not a scholar only but an excellent organizer and a great nationalist and patriot.

Sarkar was, first and foremost, a man of letters and a teacher. He was indeed a great teacher endowed with profound scholarship and indefatigable energy. Not only was he scholarly, he was loving too. He impressed generations of students with his erudition and originality. But he won their hearts with warmth which only a sensitive and a loving mind could have. He was a teacher dedicated to his profession. His devotion to scholarly pursuits did not, however make him indifferent to the various problems faced by his pupils in life outside their classrooms and the library. He did his best to solve these problems. Countless students were benefited in myriad ways by his suggestions and encouragement, letters of recommendation and other sorts of help including financial assistance. He wanted that his pupils, the Indian youth, should have a broad vision, establish contact with the world outside, visit the continents across the oceans, master the principles of modern science and technology and meet the westerners on equal terms. It was on his initiative and with the funds raised by him that a number of students went abroad for higher education in science, technology and engineering. Professor Sarkar's love for his pupils was legendary.

Sarkar was more than a teacher. He did not live in an

ivory tower. He sharply reacted to what went on in the world outside the academic parlour. He was a man of affairs. He was connected with diverse people, associations and movements. He was a missionary. And his mission was to project the image of resurgent India and emerging Asia : the Indians and other Asians were not mean judged by the standards of material achievement, technical competence and prowess. Sarkar rediscovered the glorious achievements of India and other nations of Asia in worldly matters and at the same time pointed out that they were gradually coming to terms with the principles of science and technology of modern times. To fulfil this mission of projecting this new image of reawakening India and Asia Sarkar roamed all over the world, visited colleges, technical institutes and universities in distant lands, attended conferences, joined international academic associations, addressed audiences of scholars as well as lay people, contributed to the learned journals as well as popular magazines and newspapers in diverse languages, got his books published by publishers in Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

Sarkar wrote volumes depicting his experiences abroad to inform and educate his countrymen. Comparison of the conditions in India and Asia with those in the west was a recurring theme and a strong optimism regarding the future of India and Asia was the keynote of his addresses and articles and books. Within the country, Sarkar organised so many associations and councils ; he was a member and active participant of a large number of organisations and edited journals. He contributed to newspapers and journals like the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, *Liberty*, *Advance*, *Forward*, *Hindusthan Standard*, *Modern Review*, *Prabasi*, *Prabuddha Bharat*, *Calcutta Review*, et ali. Sarkar's activities started in Calcutta but the circumference of his activities became wider and wider. Sarkar developed close contact with men and associations in different provinces of India. He earned proficiency in Sanskrit and Hindi, and in different European languages. His academic pursuits did not remain confined within a particular discipline. He moved

with remarkable ease and pace from one branch of knowledge to another. The ceaseless flow of activities of Benoy Kumar in diverse fields in different parts of the country as also in many foreign lands may be viewed as an indicator to a feeling of tension and discontent, scepticism and restlessness haunting him throughout his life. This discontent and scepticism did not have anything to do with what one might call the pursuit of a career by Benoy Kumar. Careerism was thoroughly alien to his mettle. This tension was an integral part of Sarkar's unceasing quest for knowledge of ideas and disciplines, of lands and people in different parts of the globe and his concern with how to carve out a place of honour for his country that remained subjugated and humiliated in the modern world. Sarkar, it appears was subjected to so many opposing pulls and pressures Sarkar studied under the system of education which the British introduced in the country. And his performance in the school and the college was dazzling. But his strong familiarity with the body of knowledge coming from the west and transmitted through the said system did not diminish his interest in traditional learning. When his university career came to an end, he assiduously perused the Hindu and Buddhist texts for an understanding of the Indian tradition, and he rediscovered for his countrymen the material aspect of this tradition, which was no less splendid than its spiritual side. He at the same time loathed the idea that his countrymen should remain bewitched with what happened in the past and unmindful of their duty to change the situation they were in. Sarkar had great admiration for the achievements of the Hindus and the Asians of the past ages. At the same time the ignominy suffered by the millions in India and other Asian countries dominated by the western powers pained him. He could not deny the superiority of the ruling countries of the west over their Asian subjects in science and industry, in those branches of knowledge relevant for the modern era. He wanted his countrymen to catch up with the west in these arenas. He deeply loved his country but his patriotism did not breed parochialism. He always wanted to break the narrow confines of an isolated

existence. A sort of *wanderlust* characterised his life and he demanded the same of the youth of resurgent India. Sarkar's agile and ebullient mind did not allow him to rest in peace. It made him react to the multiple and competing currents of thought and forces of change dominating his environs. His reactions were embodied in his thoughts and ideas, in his activities and plans for further action, in his dreams and visions. The meandering course of events and conflicting streams of thought characterising the times of Sarkar occasionally gave rise to contradictions in his thoughts but, at the same time, generated in him that "creative discontent" which led him to search the right kind of answers to the many questions and problems he came to face and plunge in activities of an unending variety. Indeed, "in proportion as the social milieu becomes more complex and more unstable, traditions and conventional beliefs are shaken, become more indeterminate and more unsteady, and reflective powers are developed" (Durkheim, 1964 : 96). A brief discussion of the social milieu of Benoy Kunar Sarkar is thus the first logical step towards an adequate understanding of his thoughts and ideas.

II

Social milieu refers to the internal constitution of a social group or a society "The elements which make up this milieu are", according to Durkheim, "of two kinds: things and persons. Besides material objects incorporated into the society; there must also be included the products of the previous social activity: law, established customs, literary and artistic works, etc." (Durkheim, 1964 : 113). "The principal task of the sociologist ought to be .", maintains Durkheim, "to discover the different aspects of this milieu which can exert some influence on the course of social phenomena" Durkheim's advice is honoured in the present analysis, although Benoy Kunar Sarkar (1936 : 2-3, 1941 : 127) and his followers (e.g., Mukherjee and Mukherjee, 1951 : 181) were critical of the mode of sociological analysis suggested by Durkheim, which, they alleged, smacked of "social determinism". Sarkar and his

followers complained that Durkheim overlooked the truth that there may be plurality of personalities with varying responses to the similar social conditions and thoroughly undirmined the importance of individuals, particularly of original minds, in shaping the course of society. But the allegation does not appear to be totally acceptable. For, there is a clear admission by Durkheim that "Given the same environment, each individual adapts himself to it according to his own disposition and his own way, which he prefers to all other ways. One person will seek to change it and make it conform to his needs, another will prefer to change himself and moderate his desires" (op. cit. : 94). Durkheim does "not mean to say that the impulses, needs and desires of men never intervene actively in social evolution" (Ibid : 91). "On the contrary", Durkheim continues, "it is certain that they can hasten or retard its development, according to the circumstances which determine social phenomena. Apart from the fact, that they cannot, in any case, make something out of nothing, their actual intervention...can take place only by means of efficient causes. A deliberate intention can contribute, even in this limited way, to the production of a new phenomenon only if it has newly formed or if it is itself a result of some transformation of a previous intention ... a deliberate intention is itself something objectively real...It is a force having a nature of its own ; for that nature to be given existence or altered, it is not enough that we find this advantageous. In order to bring about such changes, there must be a sufficient cause" (Ibid : 91-92). To understand the nature of this cause one has to pay attention to the social milieu. The various events in the life of Benoy Kumar Sarkar, the problems he grappled with, the basic categories of his thought and also the stress and strain and inconsistencies, if any, therein, can hardly be understood except in terms of the milieu in which he was born, lived and worked, and died.

III

AKR7029 Benoy Kumar Sarkar was born in Maldah of undivided
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Bengal on 26 December 1887. His father was Sudhanya Kumar Sarkar. He had his ancestral house in Sanihati village served by the Brahmangaon Post Office in Dacca district in the Eastern part of Bengal (which now falls in Bangladesh). Sudhanya Kumar studied up to F. A. stage (i. e., the intermediate stage between the school leaving examination and the course of undergraduate studies leading to B. A./B. Sc Degree). He came to Maldah in search of a job and secured the job of a clerk in the Munsif court at Ma'dah. Sudhanya Kumar became a permanent resident of Maldah. All his sons—Benoy Kumar, Bejoy Kumar, Dharendra Kumar had their school education in Maldah District School. All the members of Sudhanya Kumar's family came to develop a strong sense of identification with Maldah—a fact which had a very important bearing on Benoy Kumar's life

Benoy Kumar was a prodigy. In 1901, when he was only 13 years old, he came out First in the Entrance Examination (i. e., the public, school-leaving examination) conducted by the University of Calcutta, the affiliating jurisdiction of which extended over the schools in the entire region of Assam, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa (the area of Bengal then being much bigger than the area of West Bengal today) and Burma. Benoy Kumar got himself admitted into the Presidency College in Calcutta and after two years of study there appeared at the F. A. Examination of Calcutta University and occupied the ninth position among the successful candidates. In 1905, and his age was then only seventeen, Benoy Kumar appeared as a student of the Presidency College at the B. A. Examination of Calcutta University and occupied the First position in the First Class with Double Honours in History and English and was awarded the much coveted and highly prestigious Ishan Scholarship for securing the highest marks in the said examination.

At this juncture certain important events occurred in Benoy Kumar's life, the foremost among which was the dawn of the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal. The movement had an overwhelming impact on the young scholar. A formal declara-

tion of the Movement was made in a public meeting in Calcutta on 7 August 1905. Benoy Kumar readily responded to the call of patriotism. He refused to accept the State Scholarship offered by the Government of India for prosecuting higher studies in the United Kingdom. He also rejected the offer of the position of the Deputy Magistrate, the most covetable offer to middle-class youngmen of the day ! At that time the position of Deputy Magistrate was straightaway offered to the brilliant students of the University , *If one bears in mind* the humble family background of Benoy Kumar, one cannot help admiring the sacrifice of Benoy Kumar and his patriotism that lay behind the sacrifice.

The impact of the Swadeshi Movement was readily felt by Sarkar through his association with Satish Chandra Mukhopadhyay who was one of the first priests of the Movement. Benoy Kumar joined the band of young followers of Satish Chandra, who campaigned for boycotting the Examinations of the Calcutta University, the 'slave-camp' at Goldighi and championed the cause of National Education. His studies in the Post-graduate classes suffered as a result. Benoy Kumar was mentally not inclined to take the M. A. Examination.

But his well wishers like Sir Gooroodas Banerjee advised him to sit for the M. A. Examination of Calcutta University, and Benoy Kumar appeared at the M. A. Examination in English in 1906 (At that time M. A. course in Calcutta University was of one year's duration). He missed the First Class but stood fifth among the successful candidates. Though he missed the First Class in the M. A. Examination, Benoy Kumar became a prominent figure in the academic field in Calcutta. He proved himself to be a student of exceptional abilities and veteran scholars of his time recognized in him a potential intellectual leader of the country. Benoy Kumar had close contacts with important men in diverse fields and various institutions and movements that fostered the development of nationalism and nationalistic feelings. And the Swadeshi Movement was the most important in this respect.

An elaborate thesis on the Swadeshi Movement (1903-8)

of Bengal is presented in the work by Sumit Sarkar (1973). A detailed historical analysis of the National Education Movement which was an integral part of the Swadeshi Movement and the role of Satish Chandra Mookherjee and Benoy Kumar Sarkar may be found in the treatise by Mukherjee and Mukherjee (1957), while a short but critical analysis of the National Education Movement is available in the essay, "The National Council of Education" by Susobhan Sarkar (1979 : 23-36). Add to this list the articles by Benoy Kumar Sarkar himself on the said movements (Sarkar, 1906, 1907 and 1948 ; See also Dass, 1938).

The perusal of the aforementioned studies of the two movements is a desideratum for those who want to understand the historical background and socio-cultural milieu shaping Sarkar's life and action. It is not, however, possible to summarize the findings of these analyses. Only a few salient points would be noted here.

IV

"For the first time after the events of 1857 the Bengali people created and was responsible for a movement which covered the masses as well as the classes." Benoy Kumar Sarkar makes the preceding observation regarding the Swadeshi Movement. Though Sumit Sarkar expresses serious doubts regarding the mass base of the Movement (Sarkar, 1973 : 3), it cannot be denied that it had been one of the first major protests against the British regime since the revolt of 1857.

British exploitation of the colony i . India continued unabated even after the take-over of the government of India by the British Queen from the hands of the East India Company. In fact the exploitation was made in a much more systematic way than before. The fact of drainage of wealth from India under the British rule has been exposed by R. C. Dutt, Dadabhai Naoroji, Sakhararam Ganesa Deuskar and modern historical researches have accepted it to be a fact. By the turn of the nineteenth century, it was one of the chief planks in the nationalist propaganda. The Indians had a further

grievance that they had almost no voice in the governance of the country and a very insignificant role in the administration. It may be said that an important part of the disorders beginning in 1905 characterizing the Swadeshi Movement was “the firm rejection of two of the major demands of the Indian National Congress. They had asked for a vast reduction of the Home Charges; instead India was relieved of only £257,000. The Congress had demanded the Indianization of the civil services; Lord Curzon, in reply, gave an unqualified, and perhaps unparalleled public assertion of the racial basis of employment in the higher positions of the Civil Service” (McLane, 1963 : 40) The seething discontent burst forth in the antipartition movement. Though the movement did not turn into a real mass movement, “it rapidly broadened after 1905 into an awareness of irreconcilable conflict between British and Indian interests which only Swaraj could resolve” and it embodied “the first major efforts of the nationalist bhadralok intelligentsia to attain identity with the masses and mobilise them around a programme of passive resistance” (Sarkar, 1973 : 3).

The immediate and most prominent cause was the reaction of the Bengalees to the plan of the British Raj to partition Bengal. Sumit Sarkar traces the beginning of the plan to a note of Sir A. Fraser, dated 28 March 1903, ‘wherein the transfer of Dicca and Mymensingh from Bengal to Assam was suggested on the ground that the two districts would give far less trouble if they were under Assam’ Curzon discovered in Fraser’s proposal the advantage of severing the eastern districts of Bengal which are a hotbed of the purely Bengali movement, unfriendly...in character...” (Minute of 1 June 1903). Risley readily took up the cue : “Bengal united is a power, Bengal divided will pull in several different ways” (Note of 7 February 1904). And hence... “one of our main objects [in the plan of partition] is to split up and thereby weaken a solid body of opponents ...” (Note of 6 December 1904). Though Fraser and Risley were the chief architects of the “Partition Plan,” it was Curzon whose “insistence above all....virtually imposed the plan on a by no means enthusiastic Brodrick and his

council" (Sarkar, 1973 : 19). Curzon repeatedly harped on the need of partitioning Bengal to contain the "Bengalis who like to think themselves as a nation" and to crush their unity "which was a force already formidable and certain to be a source of increasing trouble in future". The formal proclamation of the partition of Bengal came on 1 September and on 16 October 1905 Bengal was partitioned to actualize a political design of the British Government in India.

The bureaucratic mind of the British Government in India tended to interpret the whole antipartition movement as machinations by a number of interest groups belonging to the educated and wealthy sections of the Bengali population. It underestimated the sense of unity among the Bengali-speaking people—"a sentiment certainly by no means all-pervasive, but still extending far beyond the narrow coteries of zamindars, lawyers and congress leaders..." (Sarkar, 1973 : 22). Bengal's relative autonomy in pre-British days nurtured a sense of unity and political identity of the Bengalees. The undoubtable facts of linguistic and literary unity, and the emergence of something like a common culture at the village level based on an amalgam of Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim and primitive folk elements constituted the sociocultural bedrock of the unity. "On this came to be superimposed the more obvious unity of the English-educated bhalok and its greatest creation—nineteenth century Bengali literature "(Ibid ; ?3).

By 1905 "the sense of identity was strong enough for the partition to provoke widespread anger and lead to a genuine patriotic outburst," (Idem). The campaign against the partition changed its route after July 1905 from petitions and conferences to new techniques of militant action, and broadened into a struggle for swaraj. Benoy Kumar as a college student saw the crest of the Swadeshi Movement and thoroughly imbibed its spirits. The political and social philosophy of B. K. Sarkar was shaped to a great extent by the ideas of the Swadeshi Movement or what he called the "ideas of 1905."

"The ideas of 1905 constituted," observes Benoy Kumar, "an organic complex of four categories. The first category

*was the boycott of British goods. The second was the inauguration of an all-round swadeshi (indigenous goods) movement calculated to promote industrialization of India. The establishment of *swaraj* (self-rule, independence, democracy) in the political domain was the third category. Last but not the least was the cultural programme embodied in the fourth category, national education...Down to the outbreak of world War I in 1914 these were the terms for Young India to conjure with, especially in Bengal" (Sarkar, 1948 : 154).* Benoy Kumar, a young man of extraordinary abilities and a sensitive mind, very positively responded to the ideas of 1905. Even four decades after the Movement, Sarkar waxed eloquent in describing its effects : "...the categories, boycott, swadeshi, *swaraj*, and national education,...registered a tremendous spiritual remaking of the Bengali people. The societal transformation mirrored forth in the ideas of 1905 was tantamount to the emergence of altogether renovated personalities and entirely new institutions. Thus was called into being the glorious Bengali revolution as a world-force commissioned to cooperate with evolving new orders in Asia and Eur-America. Young Bengal was born as a power among the powers of the world (Ibid : 155)

This appreciation of the Swadeshi Movement reveals in Sarkar "the Bengali nationalist of 1905,...serenely confident of the leading position of the community in the cultural and political life of the subcontinent" and capable of combining "with relative ease deep regional patriotism with a more abstract but still real identification with India as a whole" (Sarkar, 1973 : 496), nay, with Asia and the world at large. Benoy Kumar's description of the events of the Swadeshi days and their impact on his countrymen at that time is confirmed in the detailed analysis of the same by Sumit Sarkar (Ibid). It is interesting to note how Gyanchandra Banerji, a Bengali-gentleman in those days, excerpts from whose diary are presented by Sumit Sarkar, formed a similar impression of the occurrences of that period. The diary not only describes the humiliation and increasing misery and penury of the

Indians under foreign yoke but also makes estatic references to the achievements of the Bengalis (Sureshchandra Biswas in Brazil, the researches of Jagadish Chandra Basu), “the rise of Japan as a world power, the methods of social democrats in Germany and Russia, [which] are regarded as object lessons, which will not fail to produce their effects in India,” the self-help scheme promoted by J. C. Ghosh’s Association for the Scientific and Industrial Education of the Indians, the ‘Signs of a national reawakening’ manifest on every side. A mood of confidence and the consciousness of a new identity marked the temperament of the Bengalis in those days. True, familiarity with English education and western civilisation and knowledge of the world outside was a source of this confidence It was heightened by the fact that in literature, in science and soon in painting, too, Bengal was at the threshold of world recognition. An awareness of the rich heritage of the east was another contributory factor. Then, the “Boer war had tarnished the image of British strength, the unexpected Japanese victory of 1904-5 blew up the myth of European superiority and sent a thrill of pride through the whole of Asia.” The Chinese boycott of American goods in protest against immigration laws, Okakura’s pan-Asitaic dreams, the messages and activities of Nivedita having a first hand acquaintance with European revolutionary powers were other external influences. Many of these events and experiences, ideas and feelings are referred to in Sarkar’s description of the background of the movement (Sarkar, 1948 : 155-156). and these generated according to him a sort of “creative discontent among all and sundry” (Ibid : 155). Indeed, this milieu shaped the weltanschauung of many a Bengali young man like Benoy Kumar.

There is no reference to Ramakrishna and Vivekananda either in the excerpts from Gyanchandra’s diary or in the analysis of Sumit Sarkar. Sumit Sarkar thinks, “the influence of Vivekananda has probably been exaggerated by later writers”. Benoy Kumar living through 1905 had a different perception. He noted the impact created by “the energetic nationalism and dynamic culture-philosophy of the Ramakrishna movement

at work" (Idem). Benoy Kumar was highly appreciative of the achievements of what he called the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Movement : "The revolution concretized in the national education complex of 1905 was of the same order as the philosophical revolution called into being by Vivekananda in India on his return from *digvijaya* (conquest of the quarters) in Chicago (1893) and the west" (op. cit. : 159 emphasis in original). Benoy Kumar located one of the sources of origin of the Movement of 1905 in the recognition Vivekananda received through his famous "Chicago Address." This appreciation of Vivekananda from the western world helped the youth of Bengal shed their timidity and kindled in their hearts a longing for recognition in the world at large. The ideas and activities of Vivekananda, his compatriots and his followers in the Ramakrishna Mission fermented in this way the Swadeshi Movement of 1905 (Sarkar in Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 231).

The messages of Vivekananda had a direct appeal to the young men like Sarkar. Vivekananda's outright denunciation of weakness and cowardice spurred them to action. "What we want", said Vivekananda while *en route* from Madras to Calcutta, "is strength, so believe in yourselves. We have become weak and that is why occultism and mysticism come to us, these creepy things. Make your nerves strong. Stand on your feet and be men. It is man-making theories that we want. It is man-making education all round that we want" (emphasis added). According to Benoy Kumar, this ideal of man-making education "was a revolutionary ideal for India in the last decade of the nineteenth century". Emphasis has been placed on a part of the statement of Vivekananda quoted here in order to draw attention to the fact that what in Vivekananda attracted Benoy Kumar was a new interpretation of the Hindu way of life, its religion and ideals. In Vivekananda's messages and activities Sarkar discovered an element very dear to his soul. "In Vivekananda's declaration of war against the contemporary theories and in his call for an ideal which transcends the existing customs and breaks the 'bonds of Nature' we encounter once

again the same age-long Hindu philosophy of mobility and vital dynamics" (Sarkar, 1937 : 678-679 ; emphasis added).

Vivekananda set, according to Benoy Kumar Sarkar, a definite goal for young India when he observed, "We have to conquer the world. That we have to. India must conquer the world, and nothing less than that is my ideal. The sign of life is expansion, we must go out, expand, show life or degrade, fester and die. There is no other alternative. Take either of these, either live or die." Quoting these words from an address by Vivekananda, Sarkar remarks, "These are the soul enfranchising messages of dare-devil energism with which Young Bengal «as steeled during the decade that closed with the educational revolution of 1905" (1948 : 160). Sarkar was deeply influenced by and paid his homage to Rabindranath Tagore, Jagadishchandra Bose and Brajendra Nath Seal as well, who were, according to Sarkar, the fellow-travellers of Vivekananda in brightening the image of India in the western world (See the Phalguni, 1320—Feb.-March, 1914, issue of the *Grihastha* and Rabindra Digvijaya Sankhya (or the number celebrating the winning of the Nobel Prize by Rabindranath) of the same in Agrahayana, 1320—Nov.-Dec, 1913). They created aspirations in the hearts of the subjugated Indians for securing a rightful place in the assembly of independent and civilized nations of the world. These aspirations constituted an important aspect of the intellectual firmament of the 'wadeshi days which is writ large in almost all the writings of Sarkar.

V

Benoy Kumar Sarkar considered 'National Education' to be one of the four constituent elements of the organic complex of the ideas of 1905 or the Swadeshi Movement. He himself was a participant of the fight for national education and shared its glorious burden. The national education movement gave an enduring shape to his ideas as much as it was enriched by his ideas and activities. "National education is, according to Sarkar, "a technical term." It describes "the special ideas, ideals, and experiments associated with the activities of the National Council

of Education, Bengal, which was established by the Bengali People in 1906 as a result of the political and industrial movements of 1905" (Sarkar, 1948 : 154).

Sarkar spells out the seven-fold programme of the "educational revolution" as consummated by the National Council of Education in following terms :

1. The mother-tongue was made the medium of instruction from the elementary up to the highest University stages.

2. English was treated as the compulsory "second" language.

3. All the natural sciences,—physico-chemical as well as biological—were made compulsory in the pre-University (Matric.) stage.

4. Manual training and elementary technical instruction were likewise made compulsory in the pre-University (Matric.) stage.

5. Mechanical, electrical and chemical engineering courses were opened in the Post-Matric. stage, parallel to the usual arts and science courses.

6. Researches and publications in Indian history, philosophy, arts and culture generally were promoted as an integral part of the appointments connected with teaching.

7. French and German were introduced as compulsory for every course in the University (Proficiency) stage.

Benoy Kumar discovers in this programme an attempt to bring India in line with modern tendencies in education and culture "Indeed even to-day, i.e., almost four decades since then," observes Benoy Kumar looking in retrospect, "in spite of recent reforms many of these seven items [in the programme] of the N.C.E. have remained virtually *ultima thule* in the University system of India. Item No. 6 may be said to have been taken up in seriousness and with success. Nos. 1 (the mother-tongue medium) and 2 (compulsory scientific bias) are being attempted and themselves in their first stage." (Ibid. 157). This evaluation of the significance of the N.C.E. suggests how the N.C.E. and the National Education Movement have worked upon Sarkar's intellectual make-up. To explore

the nature of the Indian tradition and to promote scientific and technical education in the country so that it becomes self-reliant have remained a life-long passion as well as a mission with Sarkar. And he has all through advocated instruction in mother-tongue.

Susobhan Sarkar too gives an almost identical account of the genesis and nature of the National Education Movement and the Council. He, however, thinks that Rammohan's ideas had a significant influence on the National Education Movement. Rammohan is not mentioned in Benoy Kumar's account of the movement. Benoy Kumar does, of course, recognize on a different occasion, how deeply indebted the Bengalis or the Indians of today are to Rammohan. "Rammohan should appear to be the embodiment of or the very key to the entire trend in modern Indian history,—namely, the double quest of 'world-forces' (*vis'va-s'akti*) on the one hand and 'nationalism' on the other. The respect for 'tradition', the past, the 'folk', the national lines and ideals is no less conspicuous a constituent of Indian life and thought in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries than the yearning after the 'now', the 'new', the forces far and near, the *Weltkultur*. Every man, institution and movement in India during the last three generations or so registers the synthesis of 'the home' and 'the world' in all thoughts and activities.....During the *Swadeshi* period the double quest took definite shape in the 'ideas of 1905' and was fostered in Bengal by monthlies like *Navayabharata*, *Sahitya*, the *Prabasi*, the *Grihasiha*, etc. (Sarkar, 1937 : 460-61). Benoy Kumar thus acknowledges the influence of Rammohan on the "ideas of 1905" which, by his own admission, encompassed National Education.

Benoy Kumar further mentions the pioneering role of Rammohan in developing a scientific outlook and in the introductory teaching of mathematics and physics, chemistry, anatomy and physiology in the country (Ibid : 416, 612). Vivekanand's relative, temporal proximity to the generation participating in the movement and the council or the leaning of the organizers of the N. C. E. towards Hindu orthodoxy (as

is pointed out in Susobhan Sarkar, 1979 : 130) may explain why persons like Benoy Kumar Sarkar traced the source of the inspiration of the movement to Vivekananda more directly than to Rammohan. But the important point to notice here is the nature and extent of the impact of the ideas of Rammohan and Vivekananda on the ideas and vision of Benoy Kumar.

VI

Another important personality who exercised a great deal of influence on Benoy Kumar was Satish Chandra Mookerjee, the founder of the Dawn Society and the journal, the *Dawn* and an organizer of the National Education Movement. Benoy Kumar acknowledges his profound debt to Satish Chandra in different ways.

While writing about the National Education Movement, Benoy Sarkar observes, "The national education movement such as took shape in the National Council of Education (1906) was essentially the handiwork in the main of the Dawn Society and its organizer, Satish Chandra Mookerjee" (Sarkar : 1948, 157).

It is through Satish Chandra that Benoy Kumar was drawn into the movements and the Council. Again, it was probably Satish Chandra's influence which led him to engage in sociological studies. "It is as pupils and colleagues of Mukerjee [i. e., Satish Chandra Mookerjee]," observes Sarkar, "that Haran Chandra Chakladar (Calcutta University), Radha Kumud Mookerji (Lucknow University), Rabindra Naryan Ghosh (Calcutta), the present author and others made their *debut* in sociological, economical and historical investigations. Because of family and friendly relationships Radha Kamal Mukerjee (Lucknow) also has to be linked up with the Dawn Society group" (1937 : 663). In another place Sarkar writes, "In him [Satish Chandra Mookerjee] the Indian people ha lost an epoch-making pioneer as much of constructive social work as of researches and investigations into economics, politics *sociology* and *culture history* (Sarkar, Quoted in Mukherjee & Mukherjee, 1957 : 213, emphasis added).

Comte's positivism was clearly discernible in the milieu of Satish Chandra and Benoy Kumar. Satish Chandra (1865-1948) was born in Bandipur village of Hoogly District. His father, Krishna Nath Mukherjee, was a member of the Indian Positivist Society and a translator of Oriya documents at the Calcutta High Court. Satish Chandra attended the South Suburban School in Bhowanipore (South Calcutta) and then the Presidency College, Calcutta. Although, a Positivist in his youth, he was initiated into the spiritual life by his guru, Prabhupad Bijaya Krishna Goswami in 1893 and began a new life devoted to the improvement of Indian education. He remained in Calcutta till 1914 and then retired to Benares. Ill in health and desirous of leading a religious life he spent much of his time in meditation but did not stop teaching.

As a boy Satish Chandra was reared up under the tutelage of a father who had faith in positivism and its religion of humanity and ideal of service to the society. In the school he got Pandit Shivnath Sastri, a teacher with burning idealism, as the Head Master, while in the college, he perceived the Albert Bill agitation. He participated in the students' procession leading to the Calcutta High Court at the time of the trial of Surendra Nath Banerjee, who was imprisoned because of his opposition to the Bill. Satish Chandra witnessed the growing assertion of the national spirit. After his spiritual initiation he eschewed positivism but not the ideal of service to the society and humanity. This ideal of service to the society coupled with nationalistic ardour led Satish Chandra to respond to the initiative of Sir Ramesh Chandra Nitter to establish the Brahmo Chatuspathi in 1895 with the object of training up a select band of youths who would devote themselves to propagate Sanatani education and culture. The Chatuspathi was intended to be primarily a Hindu Public Religious Institution offering facilities to all young persons to study Hindu philosophies and scriptures in Sanskrit originals. It is noteworthy that Benoy Kumar Sekhar was one of the many students who learnt Sanskrit at this *Soh* at the feet of Pandit Durgacharan Sankhya Vedantatirtha, a memorable teacher at the Chatuspathi (Mukherjee & Mukherjee, 1957 : 199).

In 1897 Satish Chandra started an English Journal, the *Dawn* and he edited it till 1913. The purpose of the monthly magazine was “to make a special study of Hindu life, thought and faith, in a spirit of appreciation, while remaining fully alive to the usefulness and the necessity of the existence of all other systems, secular or religious” (The *Dawn*, March-May, 1897—quoted in Mukherjee & Mukherjee, op. cit : 215-216). An important “pre-academic and extra-university source of sociological research in Bengal” is discovered in the *Dawn* by Benoy Kumar. “Among other topics of socio-cultural and philosophical interest the problem of relations between the East and the West as engendered by culture-contacts used to arrest Mukerjee’s special attention. The journal became the nucleus of the Dawn Society established by Mukerjee in 1903 and was known as the *Dawn Society’s Magazine* for three years. When as a result of Mukerjee’s activities in collaboration with those of others the National Council of Education was established in 1906 during the epoch of the Swadeshi Movement, the *Magazine* became the organ of the national education, institutions and ideals until it ceased to exist in 1913” (Sarker 1937 : 663). As Mukherjee and Mukherjee point out, the *Dawn* published many historical, sociological and economic writings during its first phase (1897-1904). In its second phase (1904-1907) emphasis was put on discussions of social conditions of the country. To facilitate “acquaintance with each other’s actual wants and conditions” affecting the Indians a separate section, namely, Indiana, was started and a sample of the pieces that appeared in this section between September 1904 and August 1907, which has been presented by Mukherjee and Mukherjee (op. cit. : 224) indicates how well they served the purpose. These articles would be of interest to any student of sociology. In its third phase (1907-1913) the *Dawn Magazine* served as a mighty mouthpiece of the Swadeshi Movement in general, and of the National Education and allied movements in particular.

Satish Chandra founded the Dawn Society in July 1902 in Calcutta. The Dawn Society sought to impart religious and moral instruction to the college students who did not have this

kind of instruction in their colleges. Secondly, the Society sought to supplement even the ordinary academic education imparted in different colleges. The Society's object was to help the young learners assimilate and digest the information they received from books and lectures and think and write independently. But the fundamental object behind it all was to train up the students as patriots and workers for the cause of the country. Intense nationalism was the basis and the foundation of the Society. Benoy Kumar came in contact with Satish Chandra and his Dawn Society probably through Radha Kumud Mookerji who was one of the earliest Recognised Members of the Society (Sarkar's statement in Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 271). The Dawn Society had an elevating effect on many a mind at that time. Rajendra Prasad who later became the first President of the Indian Republic had come to know Benoy Kumar and developed intimacy with him as a member of this Society.

The assessment by Benoy Kumar of the effects of the Dawn Society on the youth is worth perusing :

"The Dawn Society was a non-political Institute of nationalism in its all-embracing sense. Several hundred students of colleges in Calcutta, hailing as they did from the districts of Bengal and Bihar, were attracted to this Institute by Satish Mookerjee's personality. From year's end to year's end they attended the two weekly classes held under its auspices. Their foremost acquisition in these "extra-mural" lessons was the *Gita* doctrine of *Nishkama Karma* (duty irrespective of consequence). They got a schooling likewise in the principles of industrial progress, linguistic nationalism, social service, rural reconstruction and cultural patriotism. Statistical studies bearing on the Census Reports for modern India were frequent features. No less constant were historical investigations relating to the Indian unities and the establishment of Greater India in ancient and medieval times.

It was in this atmosphere of the Dawn Society that Brajen Seal, the encyclopaedist in arts and sciences, Rabindranath Tagore, the free lance in culture and politics, Sister Nivedita of the Ramkrishna-Vivekananda Order, the philosopher of romantic

nationalism and aggressive Indianism, Suren Banerjee, Bipin Pal and Abdul Rasul, leaders of political agitation, Ramendrasundar Trivedi of the *Bangiya Sahitya Parishat* (Bengali Academy of Literature), Motilal Ghosh of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* Dinesh Sen, researcher in Bengali language and literature, Ambika Ukil, the exponent of bank and insurance capitalism, industrial expansion and co-operative stores movement, Pandits Nilakantha Goswami and Durgacharan Sankhya-Vedantatirtha, Brahmabandhab Upadhyay, the apostle of Hindu renunciation, and Narendra Nath Datta, the writer of philosophical essays, and others were brought together with Gouroodass Banerjee [a great advocate of national education and an inspiration behind the National Council of Education] in person or in spirit. A cultural and educational revolution was held in solution in the lectures, discussions and social gatherings of the Dawn Society on the eve of August 7, 1905" (Sarkar, 1948 : 153).

The Dawn Society was thus, under the stewardship of Satish Chandra Mookerjee, a meeting ground of the intellectuals of the Bengali society on the eve of the Swadeshi Movement and it fostered the National Education Movement and set the stage for the National Council of Education. Satish Chandra was a conspicuous organiser of the National Council of Education also. The impact of Satish Chandra on Sarkar's life was, to repeat, unmistakable, though Sarkar reacted to his thoughts and ideas and activities in his own way. Satish Chandra's realism, spirit of self-sacrifice, patriotism, love for the country and its people, novel, "very deep" Sarkar's reaction into the active years of the '30s of those in the field of Indian insatiable country, or outside it, in "the India" (see his inscription to a book written by Sarkar, 1937). His inquisitiveness regarding the social and cultural conditions of classes and their lives in different regions of the country - through his association with Satish Chandra he was encouraged by Satish Chandra to study and write about them (ibid). Satish Chandra's appreciation of the need for original thinking by the Indians and industrial and commercial enterprise by them and the activities of the Dawn

Society towards the fulfilment of the need (Mukherjee & Mukherjee, op. cit. : 283-288) had a powerful influence on him (See Sarkar's statement in Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 275-276). Satish Chandra's attempt at understanding the tradition of the country for locating its place in the modern world in a changed situation held a strong appeal for Sarkar. But the latter developed in his more mature age a critical view of Satish Chandra's projection of the spiritual heritage of the Hindus.

Satish Chandra's emphasis on Hindu "spirituality" appears to a later scholar a variant of Hindu revivalism (Forbes, 1976 : 125-145). Some other notable figures of the period who came to be associated with Satish Chandra and the Dawn Society, e.g., Brahmabandhab Upadhyay and Sister Nivedita, likewise highlighte : the distinctiveness and even superiority of the Indians in the spiritual field. Brahmabandhab in his first speech in Dawn Society's General Training class in 1904 compared the western culture which was totally given to the enjoyment of temporal and mundane matters with the eastern culture more particularly, the Hindu culture, and observed in conclusion that the Hindu religion recognised both the temporal and the spiritual . . . man and the Indian ideal was but a synthesis of the two . . . the speech made a deep impact on Sarkar (Mukherjee & Mukherjee , op. cit. : 9); Sarkar in Mukhopadhyay, op. cit. : 275-281 , and it remained with him throughout his life, Sarkar's rebuttal of the tact (Mukopadhyay, op. cit. . 283) notwithstanding Of course, Sarkar rejected the suggestions of Satish Chandra, Brahmabandhab and Nivedita that there was an essential difference between the east and the west

‘আবার সেই শুক্লনীতির তর্জুমার ঘৃণে (১৯১১-১৩) ফিরে যাচ্ছ । ভারতীয় সংস্কৃতির এক নয়া মূর্তি’ আমার নজরে জোরের সহিত দেখা দিতে শুরু ক'রেছিল । সে হচ্ছে সমরানিষ্ঠ, অথনিষ্ঠ, রাষ্ট্রানিষ্ঠ, হিংসানিষ্ঠ, শক্তিনিষ্ঠ ভারত । তার পাশে নিবেদিতা-প্রচারিত ও গুরুমূর্তি অতি-কাল্পনিক, অতি-ভাবিনিষ্ঠ, অতি-আদশনিষ্ঠ মনে ইচ্ছিল । অথাৎ হিন্দু সংস্কৃতি বিষয়ক, নিবেদিতা-প্রচারিত বাখ্যাগ্রলাকে আমি ডন-সোসাইটির চিন্তা ধারা, ব্রহ্মবাদ্বের বাণী, রবীন্দ্র-সাহিত্য ইত্যাদির মতন প্রাপ্ত একই দরের ভেবেছি । সবই এক

সঙ্গে বজ্রনও ক'রেছি। এই সুপরিচিত, ধারার প্রভাবে প্রাচ্য-গোরব উজ্জল
আকারে দেখা দেয় আর বৃক্ষটা বেশ কিছু ফুলে' উঠে। কিন্তু ব্যাখ্যাপূর্ণ
অনেকটা তথাহীন ও বস্তুহীন” (সরকারের উক্তি, মন্থোপাধ্যায়,
১৯৪৪ : ২৯২।)

That is, “Let me go back again to the period when I had been engaged in translating *Sukraniti*. A new image of the Indian culture was making itself felt very strongly. It was that of an India which engaged in warfare, vigorously pursued economic and political interests, took to violence whenever it was necessary and tried to gather strength and power. Beside it, the image of India projected by Nivedita appeared to be ultra-imaginary, ultra-illusory, ultra-spiritualistic and ultra-idealistic. That is, I considered Nivedita's explanations of the Indian culture almost identical with the stream of thought from the Dawn Society, the messages of Brahmabandhab, the literature of Rabindranath. I rejected all of them at the same time. The glory of the east appears in glowing colours through this very well known current of thought [provided by the aforementioned figures and association]. And it generates pride in the hearts of the Indians and others in the East. But the explanations enriching this current of thought are not based on facts and lack substance” (Sarkar in Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 292).

Finally, Satish Chandra had a negative influence on Sarkar. He could not reconcile his patriotism and nationalism and spiritualism with his appreciation of the western ideals and the British empire. He avoided actual politics. He left the National College at a point of time when the College became suspect in the eyes of the British Government. Indeed, as early as August 1907, the *Sandhya* bitterly attacked him for refusing to permit a reception for Sushil Kumar Sen, the National College boy caned at Kingsford's orders—“The truth is that Satish Babu and secretly many others of the National College as well are quite stiff with fear” (*Sandhya*, 31 August 1907, quoted in Sumit Sarkar, op. cit. : 171). Mukerjee's ovation to King-Emperor George V renders his

extremism in national politics "dubious" (Sumit Sarkar, *ibid.* : 171). These contradictions resulting from the failure of the attempt at reconciling the two opposing trends was probably a feature of the entire period (See Sarkar, 1973 ; also Poddar, 1970 & 1977). And, it may be mentioned, Benoy Kumar too suffered from some such contradictions.

VII

Whatever criticism be made of Satish Chandra Mukherjee, his pioneering role in the National Education Movement and National Council of Education can hardly be overestimated. The backdrop of the Movement was characterised by an abject dependence of the Indians on the education system introduced and controlled by the British Government. There was no scope for instruction in vernacular in the institutions of higher learning including the University of Calcutta, neither was there any opportunity for studying the Indian society and culture. Rabindranath Tagore's epoch-making essay, 'Sikshar Herfer' poignantly brought out the absurdity and grotesqueness underlying the adherence to a foreign language to the utter neglect of mother-tongue as the medium of instruction and his was not the lone voice. The education system then in vogue offered little opportunity for any viable vocational or technical education and training. Colonialism in the political field extended over the academic world and original thinking became the first casualty. Disaffection of the natives was the natural outcome and the search for an alternative began. The stage for the movement for national education was almost set. The movement was sparked off by the Anti-Partition Movement.

A meeting was held on 5 August 1905 in the Albert Hall in Calcutta against the decision of the British Goverment to partition Bengal and a fund was established "in aid of students who would leave colleges under Europea Management and join institutions managed by their fellow countrymen" (quoted in Sarkar, 1973 : 159). Some brilliant students of Calcutta University who were also the followers of Satish Chandra, viz., Rabindra Narayan Ghosh, Nripendra Chandra Banerjee and

Radha Kumud Mookerji issued a manifesto in September 1905 calling for a boycott of the ensuing M. A. and P. R. S. examinations of Calcutta University; Benoy Kumar Sarkar, holder of the Ishan Scholarship, also joined them in the campaign.

Meanwhile, measures for punishing the students participating in the anti-partition movement and those who encouraged them came in the form of the Carlyle Circular (10 October 1905—published on 22 October), Lyon Circular, Pedlar Letter (21 October), expulsion of scores of students from schools in Dacca and Rangpur, removal of a distinguished headmaster from his post and harassment of students and teachers in different ways. Fresh surges of protests and agitation followed. Rabindranath Tagore, Hirendra Kumar Datta, Satish Chandra Mukherjee, Krishna Kumar Mitra, Sister Nivedita and other luminaries apart from the ultra radicals addressed the audiences in the series of protest meetings in and around Calcutta as well as in other parts of Bengal. The student-youth of Bengal organised the Anti-Circular Society on 4 November 1905. The first National School of Bengal was started on 8 November in Rangpur for the expelled students. A similar school was started by the Anti-Circular Society in Calcutta. All the nationalist papers like the *Sanjibani*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Samagra*, *Pratijna*, etc., voiced the spontaneous demands of the Bengalis for a national or independent system of education and for a National University. The moderate leaders in Bengali politics were, however, hesitant in acceding a full support to the movement. As a result, institutions like the City College or Ripon College in Calcutta hesitated to sever connections with Calcutta University. Then, in a meeting which was convened on 16 November to discuss the proposal of boycotting the government-controlled education system and the University “The resolution of Gooroodass Banerjee and Rasbehary Ghosh appreciated the ‘devotion and self-sacrifice’ of the students but recommended that the *university examinations should not be boycotted*” (Sarkar, 1948 : 167 ; emphasis added). All this was a sign of retreat and mofussil students who suffered because of their expulsion from or abandonment of the

educational institutions managed or controlled by the government felt let down. The leaders, however, promised in the meeting afore said that a separate institution for national education would soon be started. The institution for national education was thus conceived in a spirit of compromise which indicated the contradictions of the English-educated Bengalis—their disenchantment with the then prevailing educational system was never complete, its lacunae notwithstanding. “The psychological moment when students in considerable numbers had been prepared to take the plunge and leave the official schools and colleges was lost and it would never return”. Benoy Kumar’s assessment of the decision to avert boycotting of the University examinations appears ambivalent. In one place he observed “The student revolt found constructive and positive channels” (Sarkar 1948 : 167). But his disappointment with it was expressed in another place (Sarkar in Mukhopadhyay, 1944, 315-316). Any way, after a considerable lapse of time the National Council of Education was set up on 11 March 1906.

There were, however, serious internal differences. Dissidents like Sarat Nath Palit and Nilratan Sircar wanted to concentrate on technical education alone and broke away to form the Society for the Promotion of Technical Education on 25 July 1905 at 92 Upper Circular Road. The Society had an impressive record of success.

The National Council of Education drew up in 1906 a curriculum for a three-year primary, seven-year secondary course corresponding to the matriculation level after which three streams would be divided. Provision were made for a system of affiliation, grants-in-aid and stipends and scholarships. But the bulk of the resources was claimed somewhat disproportionately by the Bengal National College and School which started on 15 August 1906 on Bowbazar Street with Aurobindo Ghosh as its first Principal and Satish Chandra Mukherjee as the Superintendent. Satish Chandra came to officiate in the Principal’s position when Aurobindo resigned on 2 August 1907. Satish Chandra had undoubtedly remained the key figure in the organisation down to his resignation in December 1908.

Apart from Satish Chandra's followers a number of illustrious teachers joined the college and the school. Most of the teachers "joined the national institutions at great personal sacrifice and on mere subsistence allowance" (Mukherjees, 1957 : 84). The curriculum and mode of teaching reflected the all-India outlook of the leaders of the national education. The study of different Indian languages, old and modern, as well as foreign languages was encouraged. The National Council maintained liaison with similar organisations in Maharashtra, Berar and Andhra. Studies and researches in Indian history and culture and literature were encouraged. Gradually, departments of physics, chemistry and biology and the manufacturing section of the technical department were started. Men like Rabindranath Tagore, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Gooroodass Bannerji delivered occasional (Extension) lectures arranged by the College. However, the initial dazzle soon disappeared. The number of students came down from 450 in 1908 to 200 in 1910 and further decreased in the subsequent years. In 1910 the two parts of the original N.C.E. (SPTC and BNC) came to be united again.

Gradually, the stream represented by the Bengal National College dried up. The reason was not simply the harakiri (as alleged by Benoy Kumar) committed by the BNC in accepting the merger but the working of a number of other factors. Not a single established Indian-owned college affiliated itself with the National Council of Education. Then, the N. C. E. had from the beginning alienated the Brahmo intellectual leaders and came to be dominated by orthodox Hindu views. Further, the patriotic zeal of the organisers seemed to have dwindled with the passage of time. To avoid the wrath of the Government the Council leaders sought at one stage to ban participation in politics by the students and teachers of the mosfussil national schools. Critics like Hemchandra Kanungo later pointed out that the Council failed to organise primary education in the country and to promote the use of vernacular medium in education ; it unnecessarily dabbled in uncritical worship of India's past glories and vainly attempted an eclectic

combination of modern science with traditionalist beliefs or values. The Bengal National College could not save itself even by accepting the attenuated form of the Bengal National Academy. What remained of the Council was the Bengal Technical Institute which was in 1924 renamed Jadavpur College of Engineering and Technology, the grand success of which led to the emergence of Jadavpur University in 1955.

Benoy Kumar Sarkar had been associated with the Bengal National College and he ridiculed the Bengal Technical Institute to be a "mistri-making workshop" for its exclusive emphasis on technical education. Both Sumit Sarkar and Susobhan Sarkar point this out and appear to suggest that Benoy Kumar proved a false prophet in this regard. Both the scholars seem, however, to have ignored two important facts. Although Sarkar tried very hard for the promotion of technical and scientific education in this country, he at the same time demanded that even technical education be accompanied by liberal education and education should help the cultivation of mind and tastes. Secondly, Benoy Kumar's incisive analysis of the relative success of the Technical Institute and failure of the Bengal National College is substantially similar with the analyses offered by Sumit Sarkar and Susobhan Sarkar. "The failure of the general departments can be," wrote Benoy Kumar, "easily accounted for. The students turned out of these departments could hardly find employment in Government offices or institutions of semi-government character. This is the price paid by the Bengali people for placing an institution 'exclusively under national character'" (Sarkar, 1948 : 182). The picture was different in case of the technical institute. "For the scholars of the technical department Government patronage in the matter of jobs is not a very serious affair. They can depend upon the industrial and commercial establishments for their careers. Jadavpur college has, therefore, been able to keep its head high..."(idem.). The abortive venture of the Bengal National College was, however, responsible for many desired changes in the curricula and nature of activities in the University of Calcutta and the part played by the students of the

technical department "in the development of the 'industrial Swadeshi movement since 1910 is considerable" (*idem*.).

VIII

Benoy Kumar Sarkar was not totally unaware of the limitations of the National Education Movement, particularly of the Bengal National College. Albeit, he did not cease to emphasise the role of the Movement and the N. C. E in rousing the consciousness of a new identity and the urge for world recognition in the hearts of the Bengalis. He influenced and was in turn influenced by the course of the movement. As a result, his own writings and other activities reflected many dominant ideas of the movement and also certain contradictions which characterized it. He took, indeed, a very active role in the National Council of Education. It Satish Chandra and his followers and associates were the pivot of the N. C. E., Benoy Kumar was the most conspicuous among Satish Chandra's followers who joined the Bengal National College. Radha Kumud Mookerji who himself participated in the Movement observes, "Benoy Kumar further contributed to the cause of National Education in the country and to freedom's battle which thus first began in India, in Bengal, by his lectures, writings, pamphleteering, journalism and books, the number of which is legion" (Mookerji, 1953 : ix-).

In the closing years of his career at the Bengal National College Sarkar wrote in one of his publications, "According to the new moral sense and novel standard of moral judgment that are gradually becoming parts of our national consciousness, the highest form of patriotism and philanthropy will be displayed by him who devotes his whole life to the diffusion of learning and spread of education among the people. Workers and organizers in the interest of India's regeneration will consider their sole religion to be the foundation of such temples of learning as help forward the development of manhood of her teeming millions, and choose to appreciate their highest self realization in applying themselves whole heartedly and devoting their whole time and energy to the furtherance of this object.

Idealists and self-sacrificing men will sincerely and earnestly flock to the field of education" (Sarkar, 1913 : 139-141). The words above may be said to be an expression of Sarkar's life's philosophy.

Sarkar chose to serve his countrymen through the profession of teaching. As a teacher in the Bengal National College and School he devoted himself most strenuously to the study of pedagogics which was included by the N. C. I. in its scheme of studies. The Report of the N. C. F. for 1908 noted, "During the last two years he had been carrying on experiments both in and out of school so as to ascertain the best method to be pursued in teaching the various subjects at the several stages of development. He has already reduced into form his thoughts on the teaching of Bengali, Sanskrit, English, Arithmetic, Botany, Zoology, Chemistry and Historical subjects" (Quoted in Basu, 1913 : xii).

The number of books by Sarkar during his career in the National Council of Education, that is, from 1909 to 1913, was sixteen. English versions of two of them were published from London.

Sarkar's analytical method combined lucidity with depth and brought home to the pupils the salient points of a subject they ought to have learnt and was "in fact altogether a new thing in the Indian tutorial world" (Basu, 1913 : xii). Sarkar's lectures based on this analytical method together with the lessons he offered to his brothers and pupils at home were published under the series, *Aid to General Culture*, which covered different subjects. The series "seeks to present in a handy form the more important and generally accepted ideas of recognized authorities on the branches of cult without which no education may be called liberal" (Sarkar's remark in the preface to the series, quoted in Basu, 1913 : xiv; emphasis added). The series was thus a protest against the narrow and one-sided development that the then educational system tended to promote. Sarkar's "Sikshanusasana" or "Educational Creed" stipulated that "Aim and Criterion of Education [are] twofold : the man must be (i) intellectually, a discoverer of truths and

pioneer of learning ; (ii) morally, an organizer of institutions and a leader of men." And liberal and comprehensive education is a means to fulfil that aim. "Even the most elementary course must have a multiplicity of subjects with due interrelation and coordination. Up to a certain stage the training must be encyclopaedic and comprehensive as far as possible" (See "The Educational Creed (1910)" of Sarkar in "The Seven Creeds of Benoy Kumar Sarkar" by Ida Sarkar in Dass, 1940 : 184-185). Sarkar's Educational Creed provided useful guidelines regarding General, Tutorial as well as Organisational aspects of education. Further, Sarkar suggested novel modes of approaching different disciplines. His educational theories served, in the words of Brajendra Nath Seal, as a healthy and stimulating force in the Indian world during that time.

Sarkar's Educational Creed emphasized that "Mother tongue must be the Medium of instruction in all subjects through all standards. And if in India the provincial languages are really inadequate and poor, educationists must make it a point to develop and enrich them within the shortest possible time by a system of patronage and endowments on the 'protective principle' " / Ida Sarkar in Dass, op. cit. : 185. See also "The Man of Letters : A Scheme for fostering Indian Vernacular Literatures" in the *Modern Review*, 1911, reprinted in Appendix IX to Dass, ibid. : 471-482).

Sarkar recommended that "Bengal and Maharashtra, the Punjab and Madras should know each other in all particulars as minutely as possible...We have to try to make at least the three Indian vernaculars, viz., Bengali, Marathi, and Tamil subjects for higher education in every part of India. Hindi ought to be compulsory at a much lower stage. In this way, we have to organise closer intimacy and mutual intercourse between the several provinces" (Sarkar in Dass, ibid. : 479). The resultant enrichment of experiences of the peoples of India would contribute to the development of the vernaculars. The Indians should at the same time, Sarkar felt, learn foreign languages to have a direct access to the body of literature and scientific and technical knowledge available in those languages.

"At least two European languages, viz., French and German should be introduced in the curriculum of higher educational institutions in India."

But how to master several languages? Sarkar during his career in the N. C. E. improvised a new method of teaching/ learning a language, which did not enforce the rigours of grammar at the initial stages. Sarkar's *Lessons on Sanskrit Grammar*, composed by him while he was a teacher in the N. C. E., demonstrated, according to Shish Chandra Basu, the author of *Ashtadhyayi of Panini* (a text book in London University at that time), that any language whether inflectional or analytical, living or dead, can be learnt exactly in the method in which the mother-tongue is acquired. No preliminary training in the generalization and definitions of grammar is therefore required, and the student may at once be introduced to the sentence as the unit of thought and expression' Quoted in Basu, 1913 : xiv).

While the books and pamphlets written by Sarkar as a teacher in the National Council of Education indicated his novel ideas regarding various branches of knowledge and the ways of studying them, the *Malda Jatiya Siksha Samity* or Malda District Council of Education established on 6 June 1907 by Benoy Kumar Sarkar and his friends and associates (including a Muslim Vice-President, named, Moulvi Md. Nur Bux , bears witness to his extra-ordinary capacity for organising institutions and movements.

IX

The Jatiya Siksha Samity was a distinct organisation along the lines laid down by the N. C. E , although formally affiliated to it u, till December, 1907. The Samity had a committee of 45 members, many of whom came from the rural areas While the major energies of the National Council of Education were concentrated on shaping the character of the secondary and higher education of the people, the chief attention of the Jatiya Siksha Samity was focussed on the organisation and improvement of primary education of the masses. The Samity thus

struck a more democratic note and "may be said to be pioneer in this field of action" (*The Dawn Magazine*, Dec., 1909, quoted in Mukherjees, 1957 : 124). And it was Benoy Kumar who "took the lead in the extension of National Education Movement to the districts. The two National schools which he founded by his personal efforts and organising ability at Malda and his ancestral place at the village of Sanihati in Vikrampur, were models of such schools, combining literary education with manual training like the latter-day Basic Schools" (Mookerji 1957 : ix).

A detailed discussion of the working of the primary and secondary national schools organized by the Samity in rural areas may be found in the account by Mukherjees (1957 : 122-126). The national schools at Malda embodied the very spirit of the National Education Movement. The movement demonstrated, according to Sarkar, "the new capacity for organised self-help and co-operation which has begun to manifest itself as an element of the Indian character....[The] constitution [of the Council of Education] is thus wholly novel and unique in India as it has so far eschewed all foreign help and is wholly managed by indigenous capital and labour" (Sarkar in Appendix VIII to Dass op. cit. : 453). The scheme for raising the resources for the national schools at Malda and its implementation is an example of Sarkar's organising ability and also an expression of Sarkar's educational and social philosophy. Appeals were made to collecting small monthly contributions from every earning individual of Malda, "irrespective of caste and creed and belonging to all sections of the community," and it was the students who would contribute what the "soul" by then had presented—artificial necessities of material existence. Also, the traditional system of "Kushumukha" was resorted to for collecting small amounts in cash and/or kind from the households of all categories. Further, donations for the educational fund were collected "on all occasions of public or social festivities—marriages .., sradhdhas .., upanayana ..ceremonies—in fact, whenever there is an entertainment which involves the expenditure of money". Sarkar sought to make

the national schools at Malda "supremely national instead of.... being merely 'donational', i. e., depending on the rich endowments of one or two individuals", by appealing to and depending on "the instinct of every individual, male or female, educated or illiterate."

In his attempt at getting the common people involved in different movements to make them truly national Sarkar appears to have struck a different note from many others of his class. Historians like Sumit Sarkar noted with concern how the intelligentsia of the Swadeshi days remained indifferent to the problems of the peasants and others belonging to the "uncultivated herd." While the class interests of the landed gentry and the intelligentsia, close associates of the former, might be a reason for this fact, "behind it lay also the long bhadralok tradition of contempt or at best condescension for the men who worked with their hands, the sense of alienation flowing from education through a foreign medium....it has to be admitted that the average Bengali Swadeshi agitator or extremist entered politics with a stock of inherited assumptions and attitudes—all the more dangerous for being largely unconscious—concerning the uneducated common folk and in particular the Muslims among them. Such an inheritance obviously inhibited the working-out of a political idiom or style with genuine mass appeal" (Sarkar, 1973 : 515).

Benoy Kumar Sarkar could at least claim the distinctiveness of being aware of the problem. Explaining the nature of the educational movement at Malda Benoy Kumar wrote, "All public movements have been hitherto confined within the circle of pleaders and doctors and Government servants, in other words, of university-educated classes. But the new educational movement has...enlisted the sympathy of all. The organisation of educational self-government has been so effected as to break down the barrier between the masses and the classes and to produce in the minds of all the idea that the movement which is going to lift the nation cannot be successful unless and until it is taken up and backed by the whole people" (Sarkar in Dass, op. cit. : 468). In his later life

also Sarkar repeatedly referred to the contribution of the folk, the masses, the allegedly inferior castes to the development of the Bengali culture (see, for example, Sarkar, 1936 : 71-76) and to the 'Parianization of the Aryan' in the evolution of the Indian culture (Sarkar, 1941 : 187-192). At the same time one may point out that Sarkar moved essentially in the circle of the *Bhadraloks*. And he remained, as a result, a prisoner of what may be called Bhadralok mentality in spite of his strong sympathy for the folk. His ridicule of the Bengal Technical Institute as a "mistrust-making workshop" or his description of the "Brahmonocracy as the Aristocracy of Pioneering" (Sarkar, 1941) or his expectations of a fair deal for the intellectuals in the regime of the bourgeoisie and his regrets for the non-fulfilment of the same (Sarkar, 1949 : 72-73) may be treated as the occasional expressions of this mentality. Probably, because of this contradiction Sarkar failed to break down the barriers between the masses and the classes and kept somewhat aloof from the vortex of mass movements in the later part of his life. His apprehension of an anarchic situation in India in case of withdrawal of the British forces from the country may also be understood in the light of this contradiction.

Though Sarkar remained at a distance from the masses, he had a genuine desire for learning the nature of folk-life and folk-tradition and it was clearly evinced in the interest he took in the activities of the Literary Research Department attached to the Malda District Council or Malda Jatiya Siksha Samity. The Literary Research Department collected valuable information regarding local traditions and folk-songs of rural Bengal and brought out several publications of historical, linguistic and educational importance. Benoy Kumar like many other renowned scholars of the time constantly encouraged the young researchers working in the department. It was Benoy Kumar who 'discovered' Sri Haridas Palit who later established himself as an indefatigable collector of manuscripts, traditions and folk-songs and wrote the book, *Adyer Gambhira*, a study of a famous socio-religious folk-festival of Malda.

A further contribution of Sarkar to the National Education Movement lay in his encouragement of scientific and technical education and industrial experiments. In order to provide some of the young men with training in modern arts, industries and sciences, Sarkar in collaboration with Radha Kumud Mookerji secured substantial donations from some of his friends and out of the fund thus created were sent fifteen scholars who were "associated with the District Council of Education, Malda, as teachers or otherwise" to the American Universities. These scholars on their return to the country were gainfully employed in different professions, firms, factories and colleges, and played an important role in the industrial development of the country. Baneswar Dass, who was one of these fifteen young men, writes in the preface to a book by Sarkar :

"গ্রন্থকার প্রথম হইতে বন্ধোত্ত ও কলকঞ্জার ভক্ত। ১৯০৮ সনে নালদহের কলি গ্রামে জাঁকি বিদ্যালয় প্রতিষ্ঠা করিয়া তিনি সেখানকার প্রবীণ গৃহস্থগুকে শ্রীযুক্ত রামচন্দ্র লাহুর সভাপতিত্বে বিলম্বাছিলেন 'এইবার আসিয়া ইস্কুলটা খাড়া করিয়া গেলাম। কিন্তু পূজ্জার সময় ইস্কুলে ধৈয়া উড়াইয়া ছাড়িব।' গ্রন্থকার তখন অয়েল বা স্টীম এঞ্জিনের সাহায্যে ছুতার-মিস্টার কার্য পরিচালনা করা শিক্ষা দিবার কথা ভাবিতেছিলেন। তাঁহার চিন্তার জার্তীয় শিক্ষার সঙ্গে 'ধৈয়া উড়াইবার' ব্যবস্থা অঙ্গেদ্যরূপে জড়িত থাকিত। তাঁহার প্রবৃত্তি-কালের অর্থনৈতিক গবেষণায় এবং সমাজ-চিন্তায় স্টীম-এঞ্জিন ভাঁত প্রবল প্রভাব বিশ্বার করিছে।" (বাগেশ্বর দাস, ড্রুমিকা : বার্ডার পথে বাঙাল) (বিনয়কুমার সরকার লিখিত পঃ ১১-১ কলিকাতা-১৯৩৮)

That is, "The author [Benoy Kumar Sarkar] has from the beginning been an ardent supporter of tools and machines. In 1908 he declared to the audience in the meeting presided over by Sri Ramchandra Lahiri and held on the occasion of founding the national school at Kaligram at Malda : 'This time we started the school, during the Puja, I will see that steam come out of the chimney of the school-building. The author was then thinking in terms of providing instruction in organising carpentry with the help of 'oil' or steam-engine. The desire for

'raising steam' remained inextricably linked with his ideas about national education. *Steam-engine came to exert a very strong influence on his researches in economics and his social and sociological thinking in his later days* (Dass, 1934 : ix-x, emphasis added).

Indeed, the steam-engine symbolising the use of mechanical power and the first great strides of modern science and technology was considered by Sarkar to be the only important differentium between the "advanced" west and the "backward" east including India (cf. s. XII *inf.* and also s. V, ch. III).

And he repeatedly exhorted his countrymen, particularly the youth, to master the principles of modern science, technology and industry and apply them for attaining economic self-reliance. "Swadeshi" in the economic field was the watch word of Sarkar's thoughts and activities. It is discernible even in such essays in the earlier part of his life as stressed the distinctiveness of the Hindu tradition (see his "Vidyalaye Dharmasiksha" (1912) in Sarkar, 1912c :97-124).

To realise it in practice, not only did he take the initiative in sending the Bengali youngmen abroad but he sought to utilize every opportunity then available in the country for getting the Bengali youth trained in modern industrial techniques. He made arrangements, for example, for sending a number of students of Vikrampur, Dacca, to Lahore for technical education. He sent a few students of Malda to the "Prem-Mahavidyalay" founded by Raja Mahendra Pratap at Vrindaban. Some other pupils of Sarkar were stipendiary apprentices in Professor Beni Bandyopadhyay's glass factory at Allahabad (Dass in Sarkar, 1934 : xvii). A number of young men received training, on Sarkar's initiative, in different factories in Bengal (consider these facts with the allegedly reluctant attitude of Sarkar towards technical education referred to at 46 *sup.*).

Advocacy of economic swadeshi was accompanied by the propagation of political "swadeshi" at least up to 1914. Consider, for example, the following lines by Sarkar in the article, "স্বদেশ-সেবা" ("Swades-Seva" or Service to the

Fatherland) in the *নব্যভাৰত* (*Nabya Bharat*) of Bhadra, 1314 (August-September, 1907) : Government সকল কাজেই বাধা দিবে এটা জানা কথা । আমাদের কাছে যা গুণ ও পুণ্যের জিনিষ, ওদের হিসাবে তা দোষ ও পাপের । আমাদের Patriotism ওদের আইনে Crime ! মাতৃপূজার ওপর ট্যাক্স বাসিয়েছে ব'লে তো মাতৃভূক্তি বা মাতৃসেবা বন্ধ করা যেতে পারে না । এ অবস্থায় Government-কেও খুস্তি কৰিব, আৱ দেশেরও উৎকার কৰিব, এ অসম্ভব । ভগবানের অর্চনা আৱ স্বাধীনসিদ্ধি একসঙ্গে চলতে পারে না । শ্যাম ও কুল এ দু'য়ের এককে ছাড়তে হবেই ।” (সরকারের প্রবন্ধ থেকে উন্ধৃত—গঙ্গোপাধ্যায়, ১৩৬৭ : ২০৫) That is, “It is already known that the Government will obstruct all kinds of nationalistic activities. What is a matter of merit and virtue to us will be taken by them [the foreign, i. e., the British, rulers] for wrong and vice. Our Patriotism is a Crime in the eyes of their law. However, since they [the rulers] have imposed “tax” [i. e., restrictions] on our worship of our mother [here motherland], our devotion and service to her will not discontinue. Under the prevailing circumstances it is impossible to please the Government and serve the country simultaneously. Worship of God and satisfaction of selfish interests cannot take place at one and the same time. One must sacrifice either of the two--‘Syama’ or what one holds dear [i. e., the independence of one’s motherland] and ‘Kula’ (i. e., family or lineage) or the sense of security provided by the status quo [maintained by the foreign rulers]” (Quoted in Gangopadhyay, 1970 : 205 ; parantheses added).

To make political swadeshi possible and meaningful, the Bengalis would have to strive hard for economic Swadeshi and learn for its realisation the techniques of western science and industry, trade and commerce. In other words, the Bengalis would have to establish contacts with the world outside and utilize Viswa-Sakti or world forces for the attainment of economic self reliance and political independence. Sarkar felt that the Indians should have a direct and immediate access to the fund of knowledge offered by Eu:-America. He raised a fund of Rupees Ten Thousand and placed it at the disposal of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishat for publishing Bengali transla-

languages. Through his writings in the *Grihastha*, which Sarkar edited from 1911 to 1914, he tried to apprise the Bengali readers of the problems and prospects of economic development and social reorganisation in India in the light of developments in economic, political and cultural fields in the world at large. In many essays in the *Grihastha* and in works like *Negro Jatir Karmavir*, which was a Bengali translation of Booker Washington's *Up From Slavery*, Sarkar time and again stressed the need for the development of a certain kind of work ethic among the Bengalis and, for that matter, among the Indians in general, and suggested the ways for reorganising village arts and crafts on modern lines for the economic uplift of the Indian masses. As Ida Sarkar pointed out, "Professor Sarkar wanted the introduction of manual labour among boys and girls even if they were college graduates. He coined some new words like 'mistrification' for boys and 'nursification' for girls. This would be the first step towards industrialisation. He desired that the people should understand the dignity of labour even if it was to be done by hand. Tools and machines were to be handled by all men" (1977 : 70).

X

Because of his eruditon and patriotic zeal and organizing ability and selfless service to the country, Benoy Kumar drew the attention of the luminaries in different fields in the country. Major Baman Das Basu, a renowned medical practitioner of Allahabad, took a special interest in Sarkar. In 1910, at the place of Major Basu, Sarkar came to meet Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya who was then striving hard for founding the Hindu university at Benaras. Benoy Kumar assisted Panditji in raising funds for the university. As he late recollects, "...I was privileged to travel with him far and wide in Northern India as far as Rawalpindi as one of the lieutenants" (Sarkar, 1949 : 131). Babu Sivaprasad Gupta, a landlord of Kashi who became renowned as the founder of the Kashi

Vidyapith and the founder-editor of the famous Hindi journal, *Aaz*, was a companion of Sarkar in this mission. A very close bond of genuine friendship developed between Benoy Kumar and Babu Sivaprasad who extended to the former all sorts of help including generous financial assistance at times of need.

Sarkar travelled several times Bihar, Chotanagpur, the United Provinces, the Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Orissa in connection with his research and educational activities and established contacts with notable personalities and associations in the field of education and social reform in these places. He had an intimate connection with the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan. Since 1909 his essays on education had been published in Hindi in journals like the *Saraswati* and *Maryada* of Allahabad, the *Young Bihar* of Bankipur, the *Pratap* of Kanpur. He read in Hindi his essay on Hindu Literature in the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan held in Calcutta in 1912. His 'Sikshanusasana' or 'Educational Creed' was published in 1912 in the *Maratha*, edited by Nrisingha Kelkar, an associate of Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Kelkar translated Sarkar's essay, 'Sahityasevi' (A literateur in service of literature), in Marathi language and published the same in the *Kesari* and the essay was appreciated in the Marathi Sahitya Sammelan (Conference on Marathi literature) held in Akola. In these ways the rest of India came to know not only of Sarkar's versatility and manifold activities but of what was going on in the field of educational and literary movement in Bengal. The Bharata Dharmamahamandala of Kashi conferred in 1912 the title of Vidya-vaihava on Benoy Kumar in recognition of his erudition and Benoy Kumar was then only 25 years old.

Benoy Kumar led the life of a free-lance educationist over a considerable period of his life. While his independent outlook and patriotism were responsible for it, the unstinted cooperation and assistance he received from his friends made it possible. Baneswar Dass offers an impressive list of his friends and admirers who were ever prepared to assist Benoy Kumar (Dass, Foreword to Sarkar, 1934: xvi-xvii and

xxviii-xxix) and remarks, “তাহার কথা তামা অসীম” (i. e., he was extremely lucky in having countless friends). Of course, Benoy Kumar's strong sense of dignity and self-respect made him refuse to accept many an offer of help from his friends and associates. Pal describes, for example, how Sarkar straightaway declined his consent to a proposal by certain friends of his (foremost among whom was Dr. N. N Law) to get a small two-storied house built for him with their funds, though he was then on the verge of retirement and in the midst of uncertain financial conditions. He even refused to treat the sum as a loan advanced by them (Pal, op cit : 140).

Many of the friends of Sarkar (as mentioned by Dass) were associated with the attempts at social and educational reforms in the country as well as with political movements. Quite a few of them came from the land-owning class of Bengal and its associates. The radical readers may feel critical of Sarkar's unstinted praise for the Bengal Zamindars of his time. While his personal friendship with some of them might have partially contributed to his appreciation of the Zamindars, he found in them the entrepreneurs of modern Bengal and resurgent India, who would supply the much needed indigenous capital for the development of industry, commerce and financial institutions in the country and also the skill, expertise and imagination for organising them. In addition, the interest evinced by many Zamindars in the cultural regeneration in the country and their philanthropic work deserved, according to Sarkar, special mention (See P. K. Mukherjee's “The Economic Services of Zamindars to the Peasants and the Public as Analyzed by Benoy Sarkar” in Dass 1940 : 49-65).

XI

The first phase in the career of Benoy Kumar Sarkar came to an end when he decided to travel different foreign countries to gain a direct experience of what was actually happening in the world outside. Sarkar sailed for England via Egypt in

.1914 and the second phase of his eventful life began. He utilized this world tour through learning several European languages, establishing contacts with the academics and other intellectuals, diplomats and political leaders, organizers of industry and commerce in different countries, published a number of books espousing the nationalism and positivism of India and other Asian countries from different centres of the world. He got himself acquainted with the events and currents of thought in the foreign lands and shared his experience with his countrymen through his many books and articles in Bengali and Hindi. A number of articles by him appeared in the journals of Eur-America. It was the first period of his cultural conquest on different fronts in the two hemispheres (Mukherjee, 1953 : 7) and it had, as would be evident from what follows in this section and the next, a far-reaching impact on the world of his thoughts and activities.

Sarkar's itinerary covered Egypt (1914), England, Scotland and Ireland (1914), the U. S. A. (1914-15), Hawaii Islands (1915), Japan (1915), Korea and Manchuria (1915), China (1915-16), the U.S. A. (1916-20) France (1920-21) Germany (1921-23), Austria (1922-23), Switzerland (1923-24) Italy (1924), Austria and Germany (1924-25), and, again, Italy (1925). Sarkar threw out his challenge as an exponent of young India in his lectures delivered in the universities and other centres of learning as also in non-academic gathering in these countries.

Prior to the efforts of Sarkar and his compatriots, Indian scholars were used to looking at the world through the Anglo-American spectacles. But India could now know France, Germany and Italy through Sarkar more correctly and realistically than ever before. And, France, Germany and Italy came, in their turn, to know of India more adequately and correctly than before. It was true also in the cases of the U.K. and the U.S.A. as well as the I . East. "In comparative culture-study India was hardly placed in the perspectives of non-English and non-American worlds. But thanks to the Sarkarian methodology, India was always placed in com-

parative culture-study in the diverse perspectives of the world along with the Anglo-Americans" (*ibid.* : 8) Sarkar's chief contribution in this regard is best explained in the following remark made by Miss Alice Bird, an American authoress, in course of her review of Sarkar's *Bliss of A Moment* in the *Modern Review* in its issue of March, 1920 : "If this little volume of seventy five poems, translations from the Bengali, represents the mind of Asia in any particular, then we have been not only imperfectly informed, but Asia has been misrepresented to us. Since western scholars, such as Max Müller and Schopenhauer, followed even by Indians themselves, treated us to the spiritual glories of the Hindus. We have had enough to spare of transcendental 'bliss'. ...Mr. Sarkar's message is one of materialism, aggressiveness and defiance, of which the west has been supposed to hold a monopoly...he has given us, as in his prose, that side of the East which has been scarcely touched by interpreters of the East to the West". Indeed, in all his writings and speeches in foreign lands his central message was that of the Eastern equality with the West.

During the earlier phase of his foreign tour Sarkar appeared in the role of a spokesman of "agressive nationalism" of India (Datta, 1957 : xxii) in particular and Asia in general. He seemed to assume the role of a high priest of "Pan Asianism" (or Pan-Indianism ?) in his writings like *Chinese Religion through Hindu Eyes* (1916), *The Folk Elements in Hindu Culture* (1917), etc., though he sharply disagreed with those Eur-American diplomats who took Japan's triumph over Russia for the emergence of the former as "the nucleus of pan-Asian crusade against the whites" (Sarkar, 1922 : 17). According to him, the fear of these diplomats was "utterly unfounded. Neither religion, nor race, nor language, nor all combined are strong principles in the making of alliances". Sarkar's reading of history led him to conclude, "The problem of each Asian people will then have to be fought out separately against its own special enemies with the support of such Powers, Oriental and Occidental, as may for the time being

happen to be interested in its fortunes" (*ibid.* : 18). At the same time, Sarkar stressed the similarities of different Asian peoples in having a this-worldly outlook and past glorious achievements in the material world and also a cause against western domination. The study of the folk-arts, folk-mores and folk-religions of China and Japan gave him the idea that the creative activities of the masses in these countries had rendered religion and religious institution significantly secular and social as instruments of human life and happiness on earth (See Sarkar, 1917). Sarkar worked hard to demonstrate the unity of religious beliefs and practices among the Chinese, Japanese and Hindus of to-day in spite of external diversities in the names of gods and forms of rituals or ceremonies (Sarkar, 1916).

Sarkar's *Futurism of Young Asia* (1922) contained a clear exposition of this "Asian nationalism." About this book Prof. Karl Haushofer of Munich correctly observed that the work "explains perhaps more explicitly than all others the relations of the national ideas of China and India with pan-Asian currents of thought and their antithesis to the Eur-American tendencies. ...It may be regarded as *Sarkar's philosophical fresco of awakening Asia.*"

One may pick up passages at random from the book which would testify to the validity of Haushofer's comments on it. For example, "Humanity is in the sorest need of an emancipated Asia, independent of foreign control, unhampered in any legitimate line of activity. Every inch of Asian soil has to be placed under a sovereign state of the Asian race, no matter whether Sovietic-communal, republican, monarchical, democratic or autocratic. For the present there is the urgent call for at least another Japan of fifty, sixty, or seventy million people on continental Asia, able to work its own mines, finance its own administration, and man its own polytechnic colleges" (Sarkar, 1922 : 25).

Then, in course of his analysis of the political history of China, Sarkar observed, "Young China feared the alienation of Eur-America, i. e., the subjugation by an 'albinocracy'

more than they could have reasons to hate Manchu absolutism" (*ibid.* : 188). He noticed a similar fear of European expansion and foreign control and the consequent restiveness in Persia, Turkish Macedonia and other parts of Asia and came to conclude, "The fundamental fact in the politics of Young Asia is thus the revolt of the East against the domination of the West,—no matter whether it manifests itself in the establishment of a constitutional monarchy or in the founding of a monarchless republic ; no matter whether it consists in the expulsion of a ruler or in the subversion of a dynasty. In overthrowing the Manchus the Chinese *intelligentsia* has sought simply to rebel against Occidental exploitation and to emancipate Eastern Asia from Eur-American vassalage—political, economic and cultural. The significance of Chinese unrest can be grasped only by realizing that the expulsion of the West from the East furnishes the sole *clan de la vie* of China's statesmen and patriots" (*idem*).

Again, a note of belligerency against the West is pronounced in Sarkar's praise for the victory of Japan over Russia and her emergence as a first-class power. "...the recognition of Japan as a first class power has purged the atmosphere of the science-world of a great part of its arrogance and superstition. It has compelled moderation in the tone of the Occident in regard to the Orient. It has demolished the 'papal infallibility' which Eur-American scholars had been ascribing to their races during the nineteenth century. The logic of the 'white man's burden' has thus become an anachronism..." (*ibid.* : 18). But the newly emerging Japanese nation "is in perpetual danger of being cornered by the whites. In fact, the subjection of the rest of Asia to the non-Asians is a standing menace to her own safety" (*ibid.* 21). The western powers could, according to Sarkar, never accept Japan gracefully since in their eyes "the success of Japan, the only free Asian state, means a loss to Eur-American world domination" (*ibid.* : 227).

Sarkar had great admiration for the Chinese people and their culture and civilization and he admitted that the

Japanese did a wrong in infringing China's sovereignty and territorial rights (*ibid.* : 234). Nevertheless, his Orient-or Asia-centricity led him to remark, "The elementary need of self-preservation thus happens to induce Japan to resist by all means any further advance of Eur-American penetration in the Orient. The night-mare of this 'white peril' is the fundamental fact of Japanese politics...Through her alleged aggressions in China...Japan is only preventing a Chinese fate for herself by strengthening her lines of defence against western invaders through Burma, India and Indo-China. And as long as China continues to be enslaved by ever-expanding European empires and to receive nothing more solid than lip-sympathy from the American on-lookers, Japan can hardly be blamed for trying to snatch a few pieces of the Far Eastern loot for an Asian people" (*ibid.* : 21).

If Benoy Kumar overworked his notion of equations of the east and the west, the idea of equations was born out of a feeling of anguish suffered by a sensitive member of a subject nation and his genuine desire for an equal place for his country with the hitherto domineering masters. Voicing the demand of the new Asia he wrote, "Young Asia does not want sympathy or charity. The demand of young Asia is justice—a justice that is to be interpreted by itself on the achievements of its own heroes. The militant unrest of the revolutionary Orient is born of the desire for a 'bearable life'...The Orient cannot stop short of achieving the equality of treatment as between the Asians and the Eur-Americans" (*ibid.* 22). All this was said by Benoy Kumar in order to assert the cause of the political independence of India (as also of the other countries in Asia). "Young India indeed wants separation from Great Britain. In simpler terms, non-cooperation with it, in as much as association with it implies only political, industrial and cultural slavery to the foreigners. Herein is to be read India's 'Monroe doctrine,' the Indian aspect of 'Asia for the Asians' programme. India's declaration of independence is however a prelude to the establishment of the equality of treatment in international

relations such as can be assured only when the races are free from alien control in every form. The attempts at emancipating India from the British yoke or the rest of Asia from Western domination must not therefore be ridiculously interpreted as attempts at bringing about a 'splendid isolation'" (*ibid.* : 303).

Sarkar thus intensely desired the independence of India and there is evidence, though it is scanty, of his direct involvement in the efforts towards that end. He went to England, as it has earlier been noted, along with Lala Lajpat Rai and Babu Sivaprasad Gupta. Crowds of visitors, mostly Indian students, Hindu and Muslim alike, Kedarnath Chatterjee informs us, went to visit them, "the three...known and proved champions of nationalism in India", at the house in Finsbury Avenue where they were staying (Chatterjee in app. VIII to Mukherjee, 1953 : 72).

"I had long talks", observes Chatterjee, "with Benoydada, who was then alternating between hope and despondence and learnt far more about the political problems facing India than ever before. I could make out that the more advanced groups in India had made up their mind to resort to extreme measures in revolutionary tactics as they had decided that Britain's slippery and perfidious tactics meant no good for India or the Indians.

Benoydada gave me books to read, some of which treasured possessions of Babu Sivaprasad, in order to impress in full on me and my friends, the needs and justifications of the hour, and sometimes even Lalaji came and joined in the earnest talks. The conviction was forcefully put forward that our only hope lay in the cult of revolution by blood and iron and hopeless though it seemed, there was no other way but to venture all and to hope for the best" (*ibid.* : 73). The arguments put forward by the group in favour of meeting force by force, when the strength of the Indians was extremely inadequate, appeared to Chatterjee, "a curious mixture of Western realpolitik and Eastern faith in complete renunciation and self-devotion..." (*idem*).

Then, the time came for the departure of the party for the U.S.A. "I received a blessing from Lalaji with an exhortation to learn, as much as possible, the methods of modern arms production. From Benoydada I got as a parting gift a '38 calibre automatic pistol, a beautiful weapon with two spare magazines and a box of cartridges and also a handful of gold sovereigns, which I knew came from Babu Shivaprasad. I was also told to be constantly on the alert" (*ibid.* : 74).

The increasing intensity of the War [i.e., World War I] raised the hopes of those who believed in the revolution by force. "I got", Chatterjee writes, "one or two letters from Benoydada from the States, and also some news from Mr. Rakshit who was associated with the Indian revolutionaries in the U.S.A. I also got some money from the American party for use in England" (*idem*).

Later Chatterjee gathered from an Indian coming from Argentina to England that an arrangement was being made for the large-scale supplies of arms to the revolutionary group in Bengal, which would help, it was hoped, a powerful uprising. "Alas, for these hopes, the whole attempt ended in tragedy, with the death of Bagha-Jatin, Chittapriya and others of that devoted band. It also resulted in the arrest of many Indians in the U. S. A. on the charge of conspiracy with the enemy (Germany) for an armed revol' ' (*idem*).

"In the U. S. A. that attempt had," informs Chatterjee "many repercussions. But that is another story. Suffice it to say Benoydada had to leave the country, as did Babu Shivaprasad Gupta. Benoydada left for Japan and thence, via Hong Kong or Shanghai, for Peking." Chatterjee received a letter in London from Peking which depicted Benoy Kumar's unceasing hope and efforts for the freedom of his fatherland even in midst of dire economic straits.

"Babu Sivaprasad was," continues Chatterjee, "arrested in Singapore and thereby the biggest source of monetary aid was denied to Benoy Sarkar. Even then the dauntless soul did not give up hope and went on with his plans, though disappointment loomed at every corner.

I leave the record here, as my correspondence was broken at this stage, and I did not get any communication from him until his return to the homeland after long years of a heart-rending exile" (*idem*).

Excerpts from Chatterjee's account of Benoy Kumar's activities have extensively been quoted above in order to give some idea about an important aspect of Sarkar's life, viz., his association with those Indian patriots who believed in the liberation of the country through an armed struggle. No detailed written account of the same is available elsewhere, although cryptic references to it may be found here and there. For example, Pal writes, "জানা যায় যে তিনি গদর পার্টি'র এবং অন্যান্য প্রতিষ্ঠানের সহিত যোগাযোগ স্থাপন করিয়াছিলেন।...বিনয়কুমারের কাছে কলাপ লক্ষ্য করিবার জন্য ব্রিটিশ গোয়েন্দা নিয়ত নিরত ছিল। তাহাদের চক্ষে ধৰ্ম দিয়া বিনয়কুমার গোপনে গোপনে বিভিন্ন স্থানে ঘৰিয়া বেড়াইতেন। ব্রিটিশ সরকারের অভিপ্রাণ ছিল না যে, বিনয়কুমার ভারতে ফিরিয়া আসেন এবং এখানকার সন্ত্রাসবাদীদের সহিত যোগাযোগ স্থাপন করেন।" (1971 : 29). That is "It is learnt that he [B. K. S] made contacts with the Gadar Party and other organisations.... The British spies kept a constant vigil on Benoykumar's activities. Benoykumar succeeded in eluding them and used to move secretly from one place to another. The British Government did not like the idea that he should return to India and establish links with the terrorists in the country" (Pal, 1971 : 29).

Then as Radhakumud Mookerji observes in connection with Sarkar's world tour of 1914, "He had unique gifts for foreign contacts and counted some of the foremost statesmen of Germany, France and America as his friends. He was on very intimate terms with the German Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg with whom he discussed the possibilities and plans of an Indian Revolution and rising against British Power" (Foreword to Mukherjee, 1957 : xii).

It is thus evident that Benoy Kumar who actively supported the Swadeshi Movement, refused the State Scholarship and a Deputy Magistrate's post offered by the British Government and actively participated in the National Education Movement

took part also, as is suggested above, in revolutionary activities. Further, Sarkar denounced, through his speeches and writings abroad (as it is illustrated in the lines quoted above from Sarkar's F. Y. A.) the British domination over India.

The understanding of Sarkar's views becomes problematical when these facts are juxtaposed with the developments in the later part of his life, viz., his virtual silence over the struggles for the independence of India, his restraint from participation in any political activity or movement, his nearly overt appreciation of the British rule in India and his apprehension regarding the fate of a united India after the withdrawal of the British forces from India. For example, he wrote that Pax Britanica gave a measure of "internal civil and constitutional freedom to the Indians" (1949 : 163). promoted "internal freedom and equality as between Indian and Indian" (*idem*). "The Government of India Act, 1935 is", according to Sarkar, "one of the most revolutionary constitutional measures ever enacted in the world's political history, especially when one visualizes India's position from Clive to Curzon (1757 to 1905), nay, to Montagu-Chelmsford (1920). The amount of factual or positive freedom conferred on the Indian people by the British Parliament through this conscious and deliberately planned constitutional revolution is extraordinary, although not without limitations" (1942 : 332). Further, "The political theory of the Indian National Congress is ~~the~~ fallacious or incomplete like that of the Muslim League in so far as each fights shy of the fundamental role played by the word in the making, remaking and unmaking of states...If you want a united India you must have British military-naval-aerial domination or protection. Should you care to do away with the British domination or protection you will have to do without unity. India cannot have both unity and freedom at the same time" (*ibid.* 342).

Then, Sarkar's advocacy of linking the Indian currency to the sterling, his appreciation of the effects of Imperial Preference ran counter to the views of many other Indian

economists, the indigenous chambers of commerce and also the Indian National Congress on these issues.

How does one explain the 'shifts' in Sarkar's ideas? One may hazard certain guesses. First, they may be traced back to the fact that Sarkar himself was the product of that kind of liberalism which grew in India through India's contact with the west and which began with the Indians like Rammohan Ray whose advocacy of the British colonialism in India for its transmission of the first fruits of western science and culture to India is well known (Poddar, 1970 & 1977 ; Srinivas, 1972), Sarkar's enchantment with the advancement of science and technology in the west and his vigorous advocacy of the adoption and application of the same by the Indians led him, paradoxically enough, to accept, though unconsciously, the western theory of the west's mission of modernising Asia (see Sarkar, 1922 : 5-6), simultaneously when he was trying to fight out the sinister implications of the researches by the western scholars that the Indians did not have a history of political and material success prior to their contact with the west. Maybe, Sarkar's greater familiarity with the west through his world-tour deepened this enchantment. The compulsions of Sarkar's immediate circumstances might be another factor responsible for the shift. Benoy Kumar was allowed to return to India from abroad only when the British spies noticed a change in Sarkar's activities, i. e., from an active involvement with the Indian revolutionaries abroad to a non-violent propagation of the cause of India in intellectual circles (Pal, 1971 : 29 & 51). Pal further informs that on his return to India Sarkar got over the vacillation as to whether he should join the independent profession of journalism or accept a lectureship in Calcutta University, when he found how Bepin Chandra Pal, the famous Bengali orator-patriot, failed to draw the minimum financial support for his bare subsistence from the indigenous newspapers and had, therefore, to demean himself by writing in an English daily that served as the mouthpiece of the alien rulers against whom Pal had once launched a relentless and fiery tirade (*ibid.* : 65). Sarkar accepted the University lectureship

since he had the hard realisation that “ରାଜନୀତି-ବିଲାସ ଗରୀବେର ଛଲେର ଜନ୍ୟ ନାହିଁ” that is, “the vocation of politics is a luxury which the progeny of the poor cannot afford” (cited in Pal, *idem*).

Whatever might be the reason, Sarkar could not overcome the limitations of the social stratum of his origin, i. e., the middle class intelligentsia. Though Sarkar's catholicity towards the west increased through his travel of Eur-America, it had its roots in the ambivalence of his class regarding the occident and had, as the next section would reveal it, already taken a certain shape by 1914, the year of his first departure for Eur-America.

XII

A brief account of how Sarkar's ideas regarding various issues, academic or political, evolved through time is in order here. The first period of Sarkar's life (i.e., down to 1914) was significant in many ways. During this period his ideas of history which had initially been god-centric (cf. his “*Itihaser Upades*”, i.e., “The Lessons of History” in *Aitihasik Prabandha*, 1912 : 1-16) gradually developed into a man-and-nature-centric vision of history (cf. “*Itihas Bijnan O Manavjatir Asa*”, ibid : 69-115, or *The Science of History and the Hope of Mankind*, 1912a). Likewise, his initial ideas regarding the inapplicability of the methods deployed by the scientists to study the nature of “lifeless objects and organisms of lower orders” (cf. 1913 : 35) in the analysis of social phenomena came to be replaced by the need he felt for the application of the methods followed in natural sciences to bring out the uniformities in the sequence and co-existence of social events for revealing similarities in the experience of mankind in both the orient and the occident (cf. 1912a). Then, as a corollary, he came from his initial emphasis on the distinctiveness of the Hindu society and culture (cf. *Vidyalaye Dharmasiksha*, 1907) to an elaborate treatment of the points of similarities of the Hindus with the people of the west (1912, 1914, 1914a). This section will highlight this

Shift from an emphasis on the differences to a stress on the similarities between the east and the west in Sarkar's ideas.

Following Shib Chandra Dutt's analysis of the "Fundamental Problems and Leading ideas in the Works of Professor Benoy Kumar Sarkar" (in Dass, 1940 : 1-27) one may speak of several *phases* and different *steps* in the evolution of Sarkar's ideas about the east and the west. During the first phase, that is described by Dutt as "East-West (1)" and which lasted between 1906 and 1907, i.e., coincided with the hey-day of the Swadeshi Movement, traditional ideas "prevailing in Asia as well as in Europe and America regarding the alleged distinction in spirit, view of life, methods and ideas, etc., of the East and West are accepted by Sarkar in the main without question" (*ibid.* : 2). Thus the beginnings of what may be called Sarkarism were marked by the emphasis on the dichotomy of the east and the west. "But the conception of secular, materialistic, constructive and activistic elements in Hindu Civilization is introduced to modify the prevalent notion" (*idem*). Sarkar's ideas during the period are available in his "Banglar Jatiya Siksha Parishat O Banga Samaj" in the *Malda Samachar* of June 1906, the English version of which appeared in the form of "National Education and the Bengali Nation" in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of 31. 7. 1906 and was reprinted in app. VII to Dass, 1940 and in his Bengali lecture. "Bange Navayuger Nutan Siksha", i. e., "The New Learning in Bengali", published as a pamphlet in 1907 and later reprinted as the first chapter of Sarkar's *Sadhana* (1912).

The second phase or "East and West (2)" covered the period between 1907 and 1911. The alleged distinction between the East and West was elaborated in (1) the final chapter of the Bengali work, *Prachin Griser Jatiya Siksha* (National Education in Ancient Greece, 1910) and (2) the lecture, *Vidyalaye Dharm Siksha*, which appeared first as an independent pamphlet and then as the last chapter of *Siksha-Samalochana* (1912). The comparison of the East and the West by Sarkar in the latter piece sought to highlight the *specificity of the Indian or the Hindu culture and the place*

of education in it. Its English version appeared under the title, *The Pedagogy of the Hindus*, first in *The Collegian* in 1912 and then as an independent pamphlet.

The Educational Creed, propounded by Sarkar during this period, came, however, to emphasize the importance of the encyclopaedic world culture, scientific and technical as well as humanistic, as the basis of man-making and of the use of inductive method for intellectual discipline. Sarkar's educational activities particularly in connection with the national schools founded by him for the District Council of Education, Malda, and the modernist, world-embracing, pedagogic principles enunciated by him during the period in his writings barring the last chapter of the book on Greece and the essay on the pedagogy of Hindus tended to challenge the ideas of inherent differences and irreconcilability of the East and the West. Thus “*two diametrically opposite philosophical currents—one traditional and imbibed perhaps from the atmosphere [see s. VI sup.] and the other surging out of the author's own experiences and investigations*,—run parallel for some time (1907-12), it seems, unconsciously and without detection” (Dutt. op. cit. : 4 ; parenthesis and emphasis added). A certain kind of tension is discernible in the *first step* in Sarkarism.

Sarkar's activities and writings during the third phase or “East and West (3)” extending from late 1911 to April 1914 indicated his rejection of the traditional ideas regarding the alleged dichotomy of the two hemispheres. Sarkar came to emphasize more and more the rationalistic, scientific, political and materialistic elements in Hindu philosophy and social life. A new thesis that the East was identical with or similar to the West in secular as also in metaphysical aspects of thought and attainments down to the Renaissance or more precisely down to the moment prior to the advent of the Industrial Revolution heralded the *second step* in Sarkarism. Certain essays in *Sadhana* gave clear indications of it. But it became crystallized through the experience and information gathered by Sarkar while he had been engaged in translating in English the Sanskrit text, *Sukraniti* (see sup. 37-38). with

notes and wrote the first volume of *The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology*. The former was a prelude to the latter and both were published in 1914, though Sarkar worked on them between 1912 and 1914.

The traditional idea persisted, however, in a certain measure, although modified by the conception of the worldly and positive tendencies in Hindu culture, in Sarkar's works like (i) *Rabindra Sahitye Bharater Vani* (The Message of India in Tagore's Works, Calcutta, 1913-14) and (2) the volume of *Varttaman Jagat* on Great Britain and Ireland (1914-16, separately available as *Ingrajer Janmabhumi* or the Land of the Origin of the English, Calcutta : 1914-1st Edn. and 1922-2nd Edn.) based on the experiences he gained through his travel in the United Kingdom and Ireland. "One or two sections of this latter book composed as they were during the spring (May-July) of 1914, previous to the outbreak of the Great war (1914-18), constitute the final specimens of Sarkar's dying but subconscious *faith in the traditional idea*, which, be it observed, *does not reappear in any form in his subsequent writings*" (Dutt, op. cit. 5; emphasis added). Dutt, it appears, overlooked that the idea of a certain kind of difference between the values of India and Eur-America haunted Benoy Kumar through the second edition of his P B H S that appeared in 1937 (cf. Sarkar, 1937 a : 7). It is, of course, true that Sarkar ceased henceforth, to make any attempt to understand and explain the specificity, peculiarity or uniqueness, if any, of the social and cultural system in India.

Indeed, the *second step*, detailed above, gradually and systematically led to the *third step* in Sarkarism which coincided with the fourth phase in the evolution of Sarkar's thought about the East and the West or "East and West (4)". He came to stress the identity, similarity, parallelism or equality between the East and the West down to the moment previous to the appearance of the Industrial Revolution in the west in all his English and Bengali writings published between 1914 and 1916, i. e., the first part of his world-tour. Sarkar forcefully directed the attention of his audience as

much to the generally ignored or underplayed idealistic, spiritual, passivistic and mystical elements in western civilisation from the earliest times as to the almost universally ignored practical, energistic, worldly and rationalistic elements in the world of thoughts and deeds of the Asians through the ages. He focussed on the problems as well as the potentialities and prospects of the emerging Nations of Asia, for which he used the generic expression, Young Asia, for success and new achievements in the milieu of the modern civilization. "Modern civilization" meant for Sarkar "Industrial Civilization" and everything in life and thought subsequent to it. The problem before "Young India" consisted, according to him, in bidding farewell to the kind of medievalism which had still been lingering and, then, "in trying to 'catch up' to the go-aheads of the 'modern world'." The anti-thesis, East-West, was substituted by the new anti-thesis, viz., Medieval-Modern, in Sarkar's investigations of this period. It was a necessary prelude (or a corollary ?) to his doctrine of sociological and historical parity between the East and the West. Sarkar elaborated and developed this idea of parity in a greater detail and with more illustrations in all his later writings.

Sarkar did not, as it has already been mentioned, confine himself within the realm of historical studies and social and cultural questions only. *He gradually came to develop (say, from 1914 when he started his world tour or, more particularly, from 1918) a strong interest in economic problems and economic processes. Economic development of India and other Asian countries appeared to him the most important goal which the inhabitants of these countries should pursue and he viewed progress in science and technology as the most important means to achieve the end.* In order to demonstrate the capacity of the Indians and other Asians for attaining progress in science, technology and industry Sarkar discovered "The Equations of Comparative Industrialism and Culture-History" (Sarkar in app. 1 to Dass, 1940 : 28-40).

"Notwithstanding the divergences of latitude and longitude

and notwithstanding the differences in the make up of the blood among the different races," declared Sarkar, "anthropology as well as modern and contemporary history furnish us with what may be described as equations or identities and at any rate similarities in the ideals as well as technical and other attainments of the historic nations of the world" (*ibid.* ; 28). Benoy Kumar devised certain 'instruments' of measurement to establish the point : "The curves of life in economic or political theory and practice as manifest in the modern East are more or less similar to those in the modern West. If one were to plot out these curves diagrammatically, one would notice that the Asian series ran parallel to the Eur-American. The 'trends' of evolution would appear to be nearly identical in the most significant particulars and incidents of thought and experience" (*ibid* : 29). Sarkar wrote, "...taking Asia as a whole one would come to the conclusion that the economic, political and social philosophies and endeavours in the different regions of the orient are mainly but *repetitions of Eur-American developments in their earlier stages*. The following socio psychological as well as economic-technocratic equations may be established on the strength of positive data :

- (1) New Asia (c. 1880-1890)=Modern Eur-America (c. 1776-1832)
- (2) Young India (c. 1930-35)=Eur-America (c. 1848-1870)" (*idem*).

This conception of statistically measurable parities or equations constitutes, Dutt rightly points out, the farthest logical conclusion of Sarkar's doctrine of identity, parallelism, similarity or equality between the East and the West. It furnishes the theoretical foundations of his *Economic Development* (2 Vols.) and pervades his methodology and programme for economic development of India. And thus one reaches the *final step* in Sarkarism.

A critical observer will note how Sarkar shifted from his original position where he stressed the cultural uniqueness of the Hindus to a theory of unilinear development of societies.

Indeed, Sarkar came to believe that the "fundamental features of civilization, pragmatically considered, are found to be the same in different peoples. It is only proceeding step by step, or rather stage by stage, from epoch to epoch : the differences between the peoples are but differences in the stage or epoch" (*ibid.* : 28-29). What should not, however, be missed here is *the thread of continuity running through his ideas and activities in different periods of his life and the various subjects he had studied since the Swadeshi days*. Initially, he studied literature and history and thus developed a deep interest in society and culture of India and other Asian and also Western countries. But his strong desire to place his country on the map of the powerful and advanced nations of the world led him to examine the political and economic events and processes. He simultaneously continued his search for solutions to the economic and political problems of development in India and other Asian countries and his exploration of the past achievements of the peoples of these countries in the material field to boost up their morale and motivate them for fresh achievements.

His significant finding was that "The modern East is about two generations behind the modern West in technocracy and socio-economic polity. New Asia is born through (1) contact with and example of modern Western progress, (2) industrialization, however slow and halting, and (3) dislike of foreign domination, intervention or concession." (*ibid.* : 30).

In the same breath Sarkar added, '*The inspiration derived from the economic, political and cultural achievements of ancient and medieval Asia is another formative force in the new Orient. This 'romantic' appreciation of the past is, however, intimately associated with modern historical, archaeological and anthropological scholarship*' (*idem*; emphasis added). The last quoted statement offers a significant clue to the *link that connected the apparently disparate efforts of Sarkar in multiple branches of knowledge*.

The brief chronicle of Sarkar's ideas presented above shows that his travel abroad only intensified a process which

had already started when he had been in his country, viz., the gradual modification of his intense nationalism and his initial emphasis on the uniqueness of the Hindu culture. His closer look at the modern Western civilisation led to two contradictory results. On the one hand, his "agressive nationalism" found a new route—he constantly harped on the abilities and potentialities of the Asian people for attaining a position of equality with their Western masters through a reinterpretation" of the oriental history. On the other hand, his unequivocal praise for Western science, technology, ideas of personal liberty and democracy coming from the West, the industrial, and, by implication, the western, way of life and his exhortations to his countrymen to adopt these positive features gave the impression that his opposition to the western masters mellowed down. They bred in him, it appeared, a certain kind of anglophilism. Or, did Benoy Kumar come to effectively perform, as a result of his tour of Eur-America, the historic role of the new elite that appeared in India after her contact with the West through the British rule? "The new elite had", points out Srinivas, "to be two-faced. one face turned toward their own society while the other was turned toward the West. They were spokesmen for the West as far as their people were concerned, and spokesmen for their people as far as the rulers were concerned. They became the indispensable intermediaries between the rulers and the non-Westernized masses, and they acted as a cushion softening the shocks which went periodically from one to the other" (1972 : 80 ; see also Poddar, 1977 :251). It is, indeed, interesting to note in this connection the following observation by Mrs. Ida Sarkar about her life-partner : "He [B. K. S.] wanted to point out all the errors that had been committed in India by colonial exploitation. He knew how to build a solid bridge of intellectual understanding between the east and the west. He was able to do so because he had the advantages of knowing both sides of the bridge better than many others" (1977 : 76 ; parenthesis added).

XIII

A very significant event happened in the personal life of Benoy Kumar on his way from London to the U. S. A. in 1914. On 14 November 1914, Ida Stieler an young girl from Austria, met Benoy Kumar for the first time on board the ship, Philadelphia, which sailed from Liverpool for the U. S. A. This first meeting of the two was the beginning of a life-long partnership between them.

Ida Stieler was born in Innsbruck in Tirol on March 9, 1892. She was the second oldest of the four daughters of Mr. August and Mrs. Agatha Stieler. The German poet Karl Stieler, her grand-uncle, wrote a book of poems entitled *Winteridyll* in the Bavarian dialect. His brother, Joseph Stieler, another grand-uncle was the court-painter of King Ludwig I of Bavaria. He painted the “Beauty Gallery” in the Nymphenburg Palace in Munich. Ida and her sisters went to school in Innsbruck. For higher studies they went to Vienna. She qualified as a Social Science Teacher from Vienna where all State Examinations were held in those day.. She was awarded a scholarship to go to London for a year to study English. It was an exchange scholarship. Miss Stieler accepted the offer and proceeded to England in 1913. She spent her days there in learning English and making new contacts and friends and travelling the country-side. The First World war broke out in 1914. All German and Austrian nationals in England were interned. “I knew” wrote Ida Sarkar, “that...I was also going to be interned. I could not contact my mother any more as the connections with Europe were cut off...I cabled to my mother’s aunt living in Cleveland, Ohio.....And...I was ‘very welcome’” (1977 : 3). The ship, Philadelphia, that carried Ida Stieler reached the U. S. A. on 24 November 1914.

The ten days’ stay on board the ship brought about a change in Miss Stieler. Earlier she had been almost ignorant of India. But through her discourses with Benoy Kumar, Lala Lajpat Rai, Siva prasad Gupta, Jagadish Chandra and

Lady Abala Basu who were her co-passengers, she came to learn a lot about the great heritage of India and felt interested in learning more about the country. What was equally important was that she came to develop great admiration for the young Indian scholar-patriot in Benoy Kumar. This admiration gradually developed into love. But it took long eight years for this love to mature into her marriage with Benoy Kumar. Miss Stieler came of a well-off European family and Benoy Kumar had doubts whether she would be able to adjust herself with Benoy Kumar's life of hardship in India. Further, there was uncertainty about his return to India because of the reluctance of the British Government to let him return to the country. He, therefore, tried to dissuade Miss Stieler but failed. The two ultimately got married on 14 November 1922. "The church-wedding was solemn and quiet....The civil marriage went off well too without any difficulty" (Sarkar, 1977 : 28). Ida Sarkar farther informed, "The Catholic and Civil marriage in Vienna was followed by a Hindu marriage in Berlin" (ibid : 29).

During the long eight years before their marriage both Sarkar and Stieler influenced and helped each other in different ways. Before her marriage with Sarkar, Miss Stieler took a keen interest in social service. On Sarkar's advice she brought out a book of poems by her with the title, *Alpenrosen und Edelweiss* (Alpine roses and Edelweiss Flowers). "The money that I got from the sale of this book was utilised for war-relief work" (ibid. : 21). Miss Stieler worked in other ways too for the Tyrolean War Fund and her love for the war-stricken Tyrolean people was appreciated and reciprocated by the latter. It is this love for her countrymen and spirit of service to others which made her appreciate Benoy Kumar's patriotism and ideal of self-sacrifice.

The life of Benoy Kumar had been marked by hectic activities and uncertainties and it had never been favoured by economic affluence. This brave and young lady who was born in a well-to-do Austrian family did not mind at all sharing these uncertainties and hardship; she went

through it all with a smile on her face and a song in her heart. She had always been, as countless pupils and admirers of Benoy Kumar testified, extremely kind and affectionate, hospitable and helpful to all those who came to Benoy Kumar for his help, guidance, or companionship. Mrs. Ida Sarkar came to develop a genuine love for India and stood solidly beside her husband in all what he did for his country and his countrymen. It may be interesting to note here that she named her daughter (born on 14 April 1925 at Bolzano in Italy and the only child of Sarkars) Indira since she learnt from Princess Indira Bhagwat of Indore, niece of the Maharaja of Indore, that 'Indira' is a synonym for 'Lakshmi,' the name of the Hindu Goddess of wealth and prosperity, fortune and good luck. This cheerful and witty lady was loved and respected by all who knew her. And the admirers of Benoy Kumar might shed a tear over the grave of this Austria-born lady (who died on 2 September 1962 in Switzerland) and who, following the immemorial tradition of a Hindu wife, marched unflinchingly with her husband through all the trials and tribulations of life in this country and abroad and who contributed not a little to the success and happiness of her great partner in life.

On the other hand, Benoy Kumar Sarkar deemed Germany (and he made no distinction between Germany and Austria) his second fatherland (*ibid.* : 107), and probably Mrs. Ida Sarkar had a significant role in it. Of course, the ebullience of the German earned in its own right Sarkar's genuine admiration. Sarkar's *Parajita Germany* ('Germany Defeated') was published in 1935 as the eighth volume in the series of *Varttaman Jagat* which appeared first as a long series of articles in different Bengali Journals like the *Gambhira*, *Grihashtha*, etc., and which Sarkar wrote in order to inform the lay readers in Bengal of the ideas and events, places and institutions of the foreign lands which he travelled so that they could develop a comparative outlook and grasp the significance of world developments for their own destiny. *Parajita Germany* refers to the points of weakness in the German people defeated in the

First World War, But it highlights how the exuberant and ingenuous, active and inventive Germans defied the spirit of despondency and engaged in redefining their fate. Sarkar wanted to inspire the Bengalis, the Indians, with the example of work-ethic and optimism of the German.

In an article in April, 1933, issue of the *Arthik Unnati* (which was reprinted in his *Bartir Path Bangali* (The Bangali on the way to prosperity 1934). Benoy Kumar described Hitler as যৌবনাবতার i. e., the youth incarnate. There he wrote:

সাত বৎসর আগে জার্মানদের অবস্থা ছিল বেশ কিছু শোচনীয়। বিজেতাদের প্রতিষ্ঠিত ডরেসপ্ল্যানের নিয়মানুসারে তাহাদিগকে সরকারী বেসরকারী আর্থিক ব্যবস্থা চালাইতে হইত। আজ ডরেস-শাসনও নাই। এমন কি তাহার পরবর্তী ইংল-প্ল্যান নিয়মানুসারে ক্ষতিপূরণ চালিতেছে না। বস্তুতঃ ইংল-শাসন এক প্রকার ধামা চাপা রাখিয়াছে আর ক্ষতিপূরণ বিষয়ক কম্র'গ্লোড যেন অনেকটা তামাদি বিবেচিত হইবার পথেই চালিয়াছে। অপর দিকে কোথায় সেকালের নরমপল্টী রাষ্ট্রনায়ক ষ্ট্রেজেমানের “শা-রয়-সয়” নীতি এবং তাহা মানিয়া বিদেশী রাষ্ট্রপ্রজের সঙ্গে লেন-দেন, আর কোথায় একান্নের যোবনাবতার হিট্লারের নেতৃত্বে যুক্ত জার্মানির দিগ্বিজয় প্রয়াস। ভাসাইয়ের সম্মিলিতকে কুচ-কুচি করিয়া কাটিয়া ইয়োরোপে লড় ভড় সংঘট করিবার আকাঙ্খায় জার্মান নরনারীর হাত-পা আজ সূর-সূর করিতেছে। সঙ্গে-সঙ্গে গোটা ইয়োরামেরিকা নতুন একটা লড়াইয়ের তোড়জোড় পাকাইয়া তুলিতেছে।” (সরকার, ১৯৩৪ : ৫৯-৬০ : গুরুত্ব বর্তমান লেখক কর্তৃক আরোপিত)।

That is, “Seven years ago the condition of the German was deplorably miserable. They had to run their economic system according to the rules of the Deutschplan framed by the victors. The Deutschplan has ceased to operate. Even the payment of reparations according to the rules of the Youngplan (Jungplan ?) is not being made. Indeed, the Youngplan has been virtually rescinded and the victors, claims for reparations have almost lost their validity. On the other hand, the conciliatory policy followed by Stresemann, a dove among the statesmen, in Germany's relations with the other nations, has come to be irreversibly substituted by the unique passion of 'Young Germany' under the

leadership of Hitler, the incarnation of youth of modern times, for conquering the earth. The entire German populace has become restive for tearing the Treaty of Versailles off into pieces and turning Europe topsy-turvy. At the same time the whole of Eur-America is engaged in preparations for another war” (Sarkar, 1932 : 59-60 ; emphasis added).

The elan vital of the German people that issued forth in the unceasing stream of activities in manifold directions under their new leader, Hitler, deeply impressed Sarkar. He elaborately dealt with the winter hilfswerke or winter relief-work in Germany under the regime of Hitler and regarded it as an example of hard work, creative intellect, organising capacity of the German and a model of social service or relief work for modern societies. He thought, “জাম্বা“ণিৰ হিটলাৱ-
ৱাজ জাৰ্মান জাতকে যশ্চনিষ্ঠায় দিগ্বিজয়ী কৰিবাৰ ভাৱ লইয়াছে” (Sarkar, 1935 : 265-266). That is “The rule of Hitler in Germany has accepted the responsibility for making Germany the most advanced country in technology in the world” (Sarkar, 1935 : 265-266). He appreciatively described how Hitler got the scientific and technological research councils or institutions of Germany centralized under the “Reichs Gemeinschaft der Technische—Wissenschaftlichen Arbeit” (ibid : 266). He admired that Hitler showed an active interest in the welfare of the German nation and a special interest in the well being of the labour (it 1 : 267). Hitler followed the path of State-socialism which owed its origin to the plan of Bismarck to counteract the unrest of the German labour which became visible particularly after the spread of the influence of Marx. Bismarck invented the state insurance plan against disease, old age, accident, etc., so that the labourers should not become rebellious. The attempt at economic uplift of the society under the aegis of the state constituted the foundation of his socialism. Sarkar observed, of course, “একে খাঁটি সোশ্যালিজম বলা চলতে পারে কি না, সে সম্বন্ধে সন্দেহ উঠতে পারে। কাৰণ এৱ প্ৰধান চেষ্টা হচ্ছে গৱৰণদেৱ অবস্থা কিছু উন্নত
কৰে’ তাদেৱ ভূলিয়ে রাখা। যাতে তাৱা বেশী লাফালাফি দাপাদাপি না

করে সেই দিকেই স্টেট-সোশ্যালিষ্টদের আসল নজর। মার্কস-পন্থী সোশ্যালিষ্টরা স্টেট-সোশ্যালিজমকে ‘এইরূপেই বিবৃত করে’ থাকে” (ibid : 346). That is, “Doubts may arise as to whether it [State-socialism] should be called true socialism or not. For, its chief aim is to delude or beguile the poor with a semblance of uplift in their economic condition. Its chief concern lies in that the poor should not rise in revolt or engage in any boisterous, agitational movement. Socialists of the Marxist variety depict state-socialism in the way described above (ibid : 346).

Germany of later days, including Germany under Hitler's regime, followed the policy of Bismarck. But there was a difference between the policies of Bismarck and Hitler. “ফাশি-নীতি আর নার্সি-নীতি দ্বয়ই নীতির ভিতরই মজুর নিষ্ঠার প্রভাব জবরদস্ত। বিস্মার্কের মেজাজে মনব-নিষ্ঠার প্রভাবই ছিল বেশী। মুসলিম আর হিট্লার পঞ্জিপতিদেরকে তোয়াজ করা নিজ স্বধন্ম‘ বিবেচনা করে না। পঞ্জিপতিদেরকে বাঁচাইয়া ঢেলা তাহাদের অন্তর্গত সন্দেহ নাই। কিন্তু মজুরদের স্বাধীনত প্রচলিত করিবার জন্য তাহারা পঞ্জিপতিদের ঘাড় ভাঙ্গিতেও প্লুরাপ্টির অভ্যন্ত। এই জন্য যাহারা মুসলিম ও হিটলারকে ‘মার্মাল ‘ন্যাশনালিস্ট’ সমর্থে থাকেন তাহারা ভুল করেন। বিস্মার্কের স্বদেশীনষ্ঠাকে একালের মজুরনিষ্ঠা দিয়া গুণ করলে যে ফল দাঁড়ায় তাহাকেই আমি বলি ‘নার্সি-ধন্ম’ বা ‘ফাশি-ধন্ম’ (ibid. : 351). That is, “A certain concern with the interests of the labour (or labour welfare measures) is markedly pronounced in both the Nazi and the Fascist policies. Bismarck's temperament was more influenced by the considerations for the capitalists' interests. Mussolini and Hitler do not consider it their duty to placate and subserve the capitalists. The protection of the interests of the capitalists is, no doubt, a part of their policies. But they do not at all hesitate to pester the capitalists in order to promote the interests of the labour. It is, therefore, a mistake to consider Mussolini and Hitler 'nationalists' of the common run. To me 'Nazi' policy or 'Fascist' policy is equal to Bismarck's patriotism multiplied by concerns with the interests of the labour” (ibid. : 351).

The above statements of Benoy Kumar indicate his strong sympathy with Germany and the regime of Hitler. His marriage with an Austrian lady might be instrumental in it. But one may also surmise that Sarkar, himself a member of a subjugated nationality, very much deplored the humiliation suffered by the inhabitants of a subjugated Germany at the hands of the other European nations (see Sarkar, 1938a : 32-33).

Sarkar analysed the nature of Anglo-French interests in keeping Germany divided and subjugated and the ways in which France had been harassing the Germans. And he then propounded what he called "The Sociology of colonialism" :

"Humanly speaking", there is no difference between the two European peoples, the French and the Germans, in 'race', religion, culture and character. *But the treatment that Germany as the halfway house to a dependency or colony has been receiving at the hands of France as the 'superior race' is absolutely identical with what Asians and Africans have been used to obtaining from Eur-Americans.* The Asians of Korea also have exactly the same life and conditions under their foreign rulers, the Asians of Japan. All this treatment is a corollary to colonialism and alienation.

Subjection is subjection,—no matter in what quarter of the globe it is consummated and by whom. The sociology of foreign rule and slavery is uniform all the world over. Among the Westerns as well as among the Easterns,—and certainly also in the relations between the Easterns and the Westerns—the old Kautilyan doctrine has universal validity, viz., that under foreign rule the country is not treated as one's own land but exploited merely as an article of commerce" (*ibid.* : 35-36 ; emphasis added).

Since Germany and the Asian nations suffered a common fate, i. e., defeat, subjugation and humiliation, at the hands of some European powers, Germany would be, according to Sarkar, a natural ally of the Asian peoples in their fight against colonial powers (Sarkar, 1922 : 35-37). "The crushing

defeat sustained by German arms entailing, as it has, the loss of colonies promises to be a blessing in disguise to Germany" (*ibid.* : 36). Germany became a non-colonial power thereby and had the chance of playing a great role in the emancipation of Asia. The "colonial powers are the common enemy of Young Asia and New Germany. Automatically therefore German idealists have their natural allies in Asian revolutionaries" (*idem*). Benoy Kumar perceived a great future for new Germany, "greater than she ever could imagine for herself while she was carving out little slices from China or Africa or taking possession of tiny unknown islands in the South Seas" (*idem*). This future lay in the cooperation Germany would receive from the peoples of Asia.

"It is to the dignity of being an ally in the liberation of colonies and dependencies that the New Germany as the greatest non-colonial power of today is being invited by the manual and brain workers of Asia. A free Orient is sure to offer infinitely greater chances to German brain and bullion than Germany can reasonably expect from the self-seeking charity of her hated enemies of yesterday. The grim determination with which German working men and leaders of public life have been grappling with the facts of defeat and humiliation and act up to the terms of the victors to the very letter,—notwithstanding the exchange difficulties and financial crisis brought on by the exorbitant indemnities, notwithstanding the loss of industrial regions in Alsace-Lorraine and Silesia, and notwithstanding the expensive and demoralizing army of occupation in the Rhine Province,—this sullen and proud endeavour will be crowned with its highest achievements and reward only when the teeming Asian millions (half the humanity of the world as they constitute in themselves) will be brought under the banners of Asian *Swaraj* and thrown open to the free competition and free intercourse of the nations" (*ibid* : 37).

Benoy Kumar had, it is evident from what goes above, high hopes regarding the future of Germamy and Germany's cooperation with the Asian nations in their freedom struggles.

While describing what Sarkar called “the *Swaraj* rebellion of 1921” in India he recalled, “It is but a natural development of the militaristic uprisings during the War period (1914-1918), in which the nationalists of Young India succeeded to a certain extent in creating the interest of the German General Staff and Foreign Office” (*ibid.* : 352). The efforts proved, however, abortive and resulted in several hundred executions and life-long imprisonments and several thousand internments in Bengal, Punjab and elsewhere. Moreover, the governments of Japan and the U. S. A. brought forward, on British insistence, “cases against the revolutionists of India allied as they were with the German Empire” (*idem*).

The German influence on militant nationalism was traced by Sarkar to an earlier date. The *Swaraj* rebellion of 1921 was, according to him, the logical fruition of the spirit of the Swadeshi Movement of 1905. And that “all-inclusive Swadeshi Movement it brought along with it the system of physical training among young men organized in clubs, known generally as *anusilan-samity*. These associations are similar in technique and objective to the Turn-vereine which were founded in Germany under the patronage of Stein and Hardenberg, after the disasters at Jena and Auerstadt (1806). In the natural course of events the bomb also made its appearance as a method in Indian politics (1907)” (*idem*; emphasis added).

The same nationalistic considerations as led Sarkar to admire Germany and Hitler and his Nazism lay behind his appreciation of Italy under Mussolini’s Fascism in his *Italite Barkayek* (Several Trips to Italy, 1932 : 60, 270-284) Sarkar noted three features of Mussolini’s fascism : First, the abolition of parliamentary democracy, in which parliament was merely a talking-shop and a centre of unending squabbles and senseless political fighting, and the establishment of enlightened despotism. Secondly, the substitution of class-conflict by consensus and cooperation of classes. Thirdly, development of indigenous industries and rapid industrialisation facilitated by the discipline ensured by the preceding two features.

According to Sarkar, “ফাশিজ্ম = স্টেট সোশ্যালিজ্ম =

সীলিনারিস্ম = ন্যাশনালিজ্ম (ব্রাহ্মীয় ঐক্য, স্বাদেশিকতা) + সোশ্যালিজ্ম
 (কু বাদে যা থাকে অর্থাৎ মজুর ইত্যাদি শ্রেণীর স্বাধীপ্তিষ্ঠিত) ।”
 That is, “Fascism=State Socialism=Solidarism=Nationalism (political unity, patriotism)+Socialism (i. e., what remains of it after the elimination of its evil features, or, in other words, protection and promotion of interests of the labour classes)” (ibid : 282). And, he described Mussolini as “ঘৃগুবতার জ্বরদন্ত দেশসেবক” or “the incarnation of the spirit of the age and a devoted patriot” because “মূসলিনির চিন্তায় একমাত্র আরাধ্য বস্তু,—জগতে ইতালিয়ান নরনারীর প্রাধান্য প্রতিষ্ঠা। আর এই প্রাধান্য প্রতিষ্ঠার জন্য মূসলিনি যে অপূর্ব অধ্যবসায়, কর্মপাটুড় ও জীবনোৎসর্গ দৈখিয়ে যাচ্ছেন তা যে কোনো যুগের, যে কোনো সমাজের উর্ভৱিকামী জনসেবীর পক্ষে আদশ-স্থানীয়। মূসলিনি ইতালিয়ান সমাজে এনেছেন নতুন কোনো দর্শন নয়, নতুন কোনো ধর্ম নয়, নতুন কোনো কর্মকৌশল নয়, নতুন কোনো চিন্তা-প্রণালী নয়,—এনেছেন কর্তব্যনিষ্ঠা, এনেছেন শক্তিশোগ, এনেছেন দেশের জন্য প্রাণদান কর্তার প্রবৃত্তি, এনেছেন আমাদেরই সুপরিচিত ভক্তিশোগ”। (সরকার, ১৯৩২ : ২৮৩-২৮৪)

That is, “To secure the supremacy of the Italian people in the world is considered by Mussolini the only object worth striving for. And Mussolini's amazing perseverance, efficiency and dedication for the attainment of the goal is an ideal for any public-spirited worker of any society of any age. What Mussolini has brought to the Italian society is not any new philosophy, technique of work or system of thought. His contribution to the Italian life is devotion to duty, *Sakti-yoga* or steadfast pursuit of power, energy and strength, the preparedness for sacrificing one's life for one's fatherland. He has brought to Italy that *Bhakti-yoga* or devout worship of the fatherland which is a very familiar note of our Swadeshi Movement” (Sarkar, 1932 : 283-284).

It is evident from the preceding paragraphs that Sarkar appreciated Hitler and Germany under him and Mussolini and fascist Italy because both the leaders appeared to Sarkar to be nationalists *par excellence*, engaged in the task of remaking the destinies of two nationalities suffering foreign domination

and/or economic and cultural backwardness. His vision of Germany's role vis-a-vis India has been noted earlier. The same feeling of hatred against domination of foreign powers was borne by both the countries. Italy's experiences too had important implications for India. Italy was industrially backward like India. Similar social and cultural fetters inhibited the growth of both the countries. India could not favourably compare with Great Britain, America, France and Germany which were far too advanced. But Italy was at best "A Second Class Nation" (Sarkar, 1938 a : 201) and, therefore, India was nearer Italy than other Western countries. India could emulate the efforts of Italy which was undergoing the process of "risorgimiento." "Italy is," Sarkar remarks, "conscious of her weaknesses and is struggling hard, thanks partly to the Fascists, to catch up to the highest. Indian patriots have much to learn by observing the steps which Italy has been taking to educate out of a mediaevally minded, feudalistic and agrarian people the type of a modernized industrial culture-state such as Western Europe, America and Germany have been able to develop since, roughly speaking the French revolution or rather since the employment of steam-engine in manufacture and transportation. Italy's experiments in nation-making, economic development and modernism represent, so to say, the cultural bridges over which semi-primitive, semi-developed peoples will have to pass in their strivings after fuller and richer self-realization" (ibid : 202-203).

Sarkar admired the "ascending curves of German economy" since the establishment of the Nazi regime in 1933 and centralized rationalisation and economic "autarchy" or self-sufficiency aimed at in Goering's Vierjahresplan. The expansion of German economic activity would be, he expected, beneficial for other lands. "So far as India is concerned, the prospects of her overseas trading houses acting in cooperation with the central commercial authorities of the German people to the mutual advantage of India and Germany, should appear to be bright. The foreign affairs department of the

Indian National Congress as well as the Indian Trade Commissioner of the Government of India at Hamburg might investigate these prospects in a realistic manner" (Sarkar, 1938 CR Feb : 219).

Sarkar's full-throated praise for Hitler and Nazi Germany or Mussolini and Fascist Italy, as is evidenced above, makes the assessment of his political position problematical for later researchers. Was he, then, a fascist? It is true, that Sarkar mentioned, though briefly and *en passant*, some of the shortcomings of the Fascist Party and Mussolini and also the kind of opposition Mussolini faced within the country (Sarkar, 1932 : 60-61, 118-119, 210-211 and Sarkar, 1938 a : 299-306). But he did not, refer to the defects of Nazism and Hitler. Indeed, a reader of the works by Sarkar may legitimately form the impression that Sarkar was not fully alive to the dangers of Fascism and Nazism. The present author elsewhere pointed out that "Benoy Sarkar did not anticipate the fascist implications of nationalism but Rabindranath did" (Bhattacharyya, 1978 :132). In course of discussion of this point, Bhabatosh Datta observed, "...Benoy Sarkar showed great depth and scientific outlook in writing about industrialization though the fascist aspect of nationalism might have escaped him. It did not strike a large number of persons either; there were great admirers of fascism in India in the 1920's or in the 1930's. Admirers were also there in England in the 1930's. People whom we regard as supreme leaders sometimes were exactly those who did not realise the political implications of fascism even in the early 1930's" (Datta, 1978 : 132-133). While there is a grain of truth in Datta's comments, it does not fully absolve Sarkar of the responsibility for what he wrote in praise of Hitler and Mussolini. Benoy Kumar lived through the Second World War. The Nazi and Fascist atrocities were not unknown to him. But did he thoroughly revise his evaluation of Nazism and Fascism in the light of his later experiences? If he did not, he failed in his duty in the role of an analyst and critic of social and political events.

It may not, however, be fair to brand Sarkar a fascist. Benoy Kumar had always been a hater of whatever went against freedom. It was he who wrote : "It cannot be desirable for mankind to rest at any point in the path of progress or of freedom. The struggle for freedom is eternal in every nook and corner of the two Hemispheres. So is freedom-preparedness.

Not even Indians—whether Hindu or Moslem—can be expected to remain ignorant of the methodology of progress or the dialectic in the conquest of freedom. The process belongs to the very nature of power as an individual and social force. Privileges and rights have hardly ever been surrendered by the upholders of the *status quo* to new individuals, races, groups, castes or classes. The world is used to climbing like corals grave by grave that have a pathway sunward. In India as elsewhere freedom has to be wrested from the powers-that-be, inch by inch or mile by mile, as the case may be" (1939 CR Jan. : 110).

Benoy Kumar all through opposed dogmatism of all sorts. A lover of individual Freedom, he wrote,

"Whenever I find two persons trying to agree with each other I feel inclined to suspect that there is a chance for some moral or spiritual injustice happening in the world.

"Truth is individual, personal, concrete, not universal general, abstract.

Not 'Truth' but *truths* constitute the objective verdict of philosophy" (1928 : 1).

The statement is an echo of an observation by William James in his *Pragmatism* (1907 : 231-3). And, Emile Durkheim's comment on the pragmatist notion of truth is worth perusing. Durkheim notices a stiff opposition to dogmatism in the pragmatists' notion of truth. He observes, "According to the pragmatists, the final difficulty presented by the dogmatic conception is that when one accepts that there is a single truth, when one does not understand that there is a reason for the diversity of judgement and opinions, one runs the risk of ending up in intolerance. The truly tolerant man

not only admits that among thoughts there are differences that must be respected and that one does not have the right to do violence to the consciences of people, but also understands that the diversity of opinions and beliefs corresponds to a necessity, to the demands of emotional and intellectual life. In short, if these divergencies exist, it is good that they do.

Thus pragmatism is very keenly aware of the diversity of minds and the living character of truth" (Durkheim, 1983 : 20 ; emphases in the original). It is, therefore, very difficult to believe that Sarkar holding a pragmatist view of truth would wholeheartedly subscribe to Fascism or Nazism which turned out to be operating "in a manner fanatically one-sided and with unscrupulous disregard for truth, impartiality or fair play" (Sabine, 1963 : 902). It is, indeed, worth pondering whether and how far Sarkar would have accepted the following position of Hitler : "The great masses are only a part of nature...What they want is the victory of the stronger and annihilation or the unconditional surrender of the weaker" (*Mein Kampf*, Eng. tr. 1939, New York : 469, quoted in Sabine, ibid. ; emphasis added). Fascism or Nazism was thus marked by intolerance. As Nehru puts it, "The programme of the Nazis was not a clear or a positive one. It was intensely nationalistic, and laid stress on the greatness of Germany and the Germans, and for the rest it was a hotch-potch of various hatreds" (1964 : 946).

This policy of hatred gave birth to anti-semitism and extermination of thousands of Jews. Though Sarkar's virtual silence over it is inexplicable and disconcerting, Sarkar, a respecter of freedom and the right to differ did not, it may be safely said, support it. And there are ample evidences that he did not believe in any theory propagating the purity of any race (cf. Sarkar, 1936 *passim* ; 1938 C R Mar. : 341-52).

Wilhelm's following remark about those Indians who had a sympathy with Hitler is equally applicable to Sarkar also and is a pointer to his infirmity and myopia in his evaluation of Hitler and Nazism and Fascism :

"There were other Indian politicians like Subhas Chandra

Bose who gave in to the temptations of *artha* and regarded Nazi Germany as a natural ally against British rule, though Hitler had written in *Mein Kampf*: ‘England will only lose India, if either its administration becomes a victim of racial decomposition or if it is overcome by the sword of a powerful enemy...Despite all, as a Teuton I prefer to see India under English rule than under any other’ (Wilhelm, 1978 : 79)

It is, however, refreshing to note that albeit Sarkar praised Mussolini, he hailed the efforts of the opposition in forcing Mussolini to bring in moderation in the behaviour of the fascists (Sarkar 1938 a : 304) and revise the electoral law of the country. “The world has come to realize that there is a limit to dictatorship and absolutism. And although a little bit early to say so the Italian Opposition deserves a good recognition in the history of contemporary liberty (April, 1925)” (*ibid* : 306).

XIV

The third phase in Benoy Kumar’s life started with his return to India in 1925. Accompanied by his family, he landed in Bombay in 1925. The Sarkars lived in the Taj Mahal Hotel in Bombay for two weeks as the guests of Raja Sivaprasad Gupta of Benaras. They met here Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and a close bond of affection developed between them and the patriot-poetess. They were then invited by “the well-known Mr. Motilal Nehru, father of Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru and grandfather of Mrs. Indira Gandhi.” “A week in the home of this outstanding personality was,” recalled Mrs. Sarkar later in her life, “a great experience for me which I should never forget. Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru’s daughter Indira was about eight years old at that time. She often came to me and asked me if she could carry my daughter Indira, her namesake, into the garden and play with her” (1977 :38).

Mrs. Sarkar further wrote, “I enjoyed my tea-talks with the wife of Mr. Motilal Nehru. This charming lady

Swaruprani was full of richness of heart...and became the ideal of Indian womanhood in my eyes. On one occasion she placed her loving hands on my head and said to me that I should learn to love India with all my heart and then everything else would be fine" (ibid. : 38-39).

"Mr Jawaharlal Nehru also took me", continued Mrs. Sarkar, "to see his beautiful wife, Kamala Devi. I was struck with admiration for this lovely lady who in spite of her failing health followed every movement and activity of her husband with great intensity. Mr Jawaharlal Nehru walked with us in the garden after dinner and spoke about his plans and discussed the future of India" (ibid. : 39) The Sarkars met many other notable persons of Allahabad including Dr. Baman Das Basu of the Panini Academy. From Allahabad they proceeded to Lucknow to meet Professor Radha Kumud Mookerji and therefrom to Benares where they enjoyed the hospitality of Raja Sivaprasad Gupta in the latter's palace. Mrs Sarkar gave an elaborate account of the generous treatment from Guptaji and the colourful experience she gathered at Guptaji's estate in Benares (ibid. : 39-48). Guptaji sought Sarkar's active cooperation in developing his Kashi Vidyapith. Benoy Kumar was, however, eager to return to Calcutta. The Sarkars became the guests of barrister Kumud Nath Chaudhury. Then they came to permanently reside in a flat of the house at 45 Police Hospital Road, Calcutta. Benoy Kumar resided there till 1949 when he left for the U. S. A. and he died in the U. S. A. in the same year.

Thanks to the efforts of Dr. N. N. Law, a reputed and an influential scholar in the circle of Calcutta University, Benoy Kumar was appointed a Lecturer in the Post-Graduate Department of Economics in Calcutta University in 1926. He taught there economics, politics and sociology. In his course of lectures in sociology subjects like population, poverty, public health, crime and delinquency and punishment or reformatory measures, social context of education, etc., figured prominently. He discussed sociological theories and

concepts as well as important themes of applied sociology. He served Calcutta University till February 1949.

During this period Sarkar impressed his pupils and countrymen at large, first, as a great teacher of uncommon genius and a great orator; secondly, as a great builder of India's intellectual life; thirdly, as a great organizer and founder of a number of organizations devoted to research and other intellectual pursuits; and, fourthly, as a prolific writer both in Bengali and in foreign languages on economic, political, social, literary and cultural matters.

Throughout the period Sarkar stayed in India with a short break in 1929-31 when he had been in Europe as a Visiting Professor. He left Calcutta in May, 1929 and travelled Italy, Switzerland, France, England, Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Austria. During this visit he enquired into the nature of economic and sociological researches as well as the advancement of industry, trade and commerce, banking and insurance, etc., in these countries. He delivered lectures to different universities and technical institutes and contributed articles to various foreign journals.

Sarkar studied the activities of the League of Nations and the I. L. O. at Geneva from October, 1929 to February, 1930. He lectured in French in the University of Geneva (November, 1929) and in the Institute National Genevois (January, 1930) on economic and social developments in India. In February, 1930, he delivered lectures in Italian in the Universita Bocconi and the Royal University of Padua. Nominated by the *Deutsche Akademie*, he delivered as a *Gastprofessur* a series of lectures in German in the Technological University (Technische Hochschule) of Munich from March, 1930 to February, 1931. World economy and world technocracy constituted the main theme of these lectures. He addressed also, always in German, several other German Universities and the chambers of commerce in different cities of Germany.

The University of Rome invited Sarkar in 1931. He

adorned the position of the President of the Economic Section of the International Congress on Population at Rome in September 1931. His paper in Italian, viz., *I Quozienti di Natalita, di Mortalita, e di Aumento Naturale nell' India Attuale nel Quadro della Demographia Comparata*, contributed on this occasion was printed as a regular book containing 80 pages. It drew the special attention of several Italian journals at that time. It is interesting to note that from that time on Sarkar became seriously interested in population studies. Later he wrote *Les Races, les classes et les forces transformatrices au point de vue du metabolisme social* for the International Congress of Sociology at Brussels in 1935 and then another paper by him, viz., "Neue Orientierungen im Optimum und wirtschaftliche Leistungsfähigkeit mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der indischen Bevölkerungs-und Gesundheitsstatistik," was presented to the International Congress on Population in Berlin in 1935, where he was one of the Vice-Presidents. Sarkar delivered his presidential address at the Sociological Section of the First Indian Population Conference in Lucknow on 3 & 4 February 1936. The address was entitled "Open Questions and Reconstructions in the Sociology of Population." He wrote on different aspects of population problem both in English and in Bengali in different journals and books. Sarkar became interested in the qualitative aspects of population along with its quantitative aspects. The shape and size as well as the quality of a population were, according to him, influenced by various social processes and cultural values as well as by economic conditions. He thus became a pioneer in social demography in the country. *The Population of Sociology* by Sarkar was published in 1936. It is a little surprising that not a single work by Sarkar on population finds a mention in the survey of works in Social Demography made by Roy Burman (1974) in the first I C S S R Survey of Research in Sociology and Social Anthropology in India. Of Course, *The Population of Sociology* is mentioned in the Bibliography in the I C S S R Survey of Research in Demography (Desai, 1975 :

147) wherein the work has been classified under General demography (*ibid* : 141 & 147).

Sarkar returned from Italy to Calcutta in 1931 and plunged into the activities which had started on his return to the country from his first tour of the world. Three important announcements which Sarkar made at that time and which influenced all his subsequent activities should, therefore, be mentioned here. First, Sarkar sought to blast the isolation, rather, solipsism, of the Indians which resulted, according to him, from their false sense of superiority to other races : "It is high time for us to refuse believing that India is the *guru* of mankind, to refuse believing,—within closed doors!—that the men and women of India are superior to men and women of Eur-America. Further, the time has come when we should be bold enough to declare without vagueness that the men and women of Eur-America to-day are morally and intellectually, aye, spiritually far above the men and women of Asia" (1938 : 63).

Secondly, in consonance with his above statement, Sarkar insisted that the Indians should not at all hesitate in following the industrially advanced nations of the west and in borrowing, whenever necessary, capital and ideas and techniques from them, though he did not overlook the need for *indigenisation* of the same : "Instead of waiting for foreign nations to bring their goods and ideas, both material and spiritual, to our doors, it should be the part of our life's creed boldly to venture out into the world, 'discover which of the inventions, experiments, ideals, politics and laws of different nations *are likely to be regarded as worth having*, and introduce them to the Indian world through the Indian intermediaries. For, *Young India should seek to function as a self-conscious, selective, assimilative and pioneering importer on international exchange*" (*ibid.* : 8 ; emphasis added).

Thirdly, in keeping with the foregoing announcements, Sarkar took the initiative in introducing different views, ideas and theories, then extant in foreign lands. He took a special interest in those ideas and theories which centred

around the practical problems of political and economic development. As he observed at that time, i. e., in 1925, "My previous work lay specially in the field of comparative culture-history and sociology. But for the last five years I have been specialising in the problems of post-war *economic development*" (*ibid.* : 19-20). He declared that his work in India would thenceforth "be a continuation of this work" (*ibid.* : 20). Indeed, all of Sarkar's subsequent writings including those in sociology clearly expressed his deep concern with India's economic development and the nurturing of a congenial milieu for the same. He came to reckon with different political and economic philosophies and systems of the west, including capitalism and socialism. How he was pulled in two opposite directions by socialism and capitalism would form the substance of the two immediately succeeding sections.

XV

Sarkar's assessment of the impact of the Bolshevik rule in Russia on Asia is marked by an emotional fervour: "The idealists of revolutionary Russia have made their *debut* by... declaring the independence of subject races both Asian and European. This is the first instance in the annals of diplomacy and foreign policy when Europe has been honest and sincere to Asia. This is the first time in modern history when the East and the West have been treated on equal terms. This is why intellectuals of the New Orient hail with enthusiasm the birth of Bolshevism as a spiritual force. For they find in Young Russia their only Western colleague in the task of making the world safe from economic exploitation, colonialism and foreign rule" (Sarkar, 1925 : 34-35). Sarkar discovered that other socialist groups along with the Bolsheviks sought "to prevent the workingmen of colonial powers from fighting against the rebels in the dependencies." (*ibid.* : 35).

"The surest bulwark will then", continued Sarkar in his characteristically flamboyant style, "be furnished by an

alliance of the international socialism of continental Europe with the militant nationalism of Young Asia until the new Metternichs are forced to capitulate and find their proper place in the limbo of oblivion. Ultimately through this grand rapprochement will the principles of the Russian Revolution, like those of the French, become the first postulates of a renovated age of World-Liberation. It is on such an understanding that the platform of cooperation between the Sinnfeiners of Asia and fighters for the New Order in Eur-America can be erected for the emancipation of the races and classes from political and economic thraldom" (*idem*). What could be a more eloquent testimonial for Bolshevism and Bolshevik Russia than this ?

In another work by him which also was published in 1925, Sarkar remarked, "Never was the economic interpretation of history, understood in its elastic sense, more a reality than at the present moment. None but the economic experts with their programs of development for the masses and welfare for the nations are competent to tackle the contemporary problems of politics nor organize effective political parties and spiritualize the people with soul-enfranchising ideals" (1938 a '1925' : vii). He considered political creed and political tactics to have exercised an equally powerful influence on the course of economic development of the nations.

One of the chief reasons why Sarkar, an ardent nationalist was attracted towards Bolshevism in Russia was that he found in its practice by Lenin a promise of genuine help to the subjugated peoples of Asia in their struggles for national liberation. In 1917, while he returned to the U. S. A. from China via Japan, he noted with admiration how Lenin saw, alongside his revolutionary activities within his country, to the withdrawal of the Russian troops as well as other vestiges of the (Czarist) Russian Empire from Iran, Afghanistan and China. He observed, তখনই মনে হ'লো,—লেনিন মার্কসেরও পরবর্তী ধাপ।...এর্তদিনে আমি সমাজ-তন্ত্রী হ'লাম (১৯১৭-১৮)।...

লেনিনের এণ্সেম্বলি-বিষয়ক কাজ না দেখলে সোশ্যালিজম বা কমিউনিজমের গতে পড়া সম্ভব হ'তো কি না বলা কঠিন।...বিভিন্ন প্রাধীন দেশের জাতিগত রাষ্ট্রিক স্বাধীনতার জন্য লেনিনের দরদ আছে। লেনিন-র্মাত প্রথম দিন হ'তেই প্রকৃত কায়ক্রমে গাঁথা রংঘেছে জাতীয় প্রবাজের সঙ্গে। এই দশ্যে আমার চিন্তায় যুগান্তের সাধিত হয়েছে। মানব-গোলামের স্বরূপে লেনিন যুগান্তের সাথক”। (সরকারের বিবৃতি, মুখ্যোপাধ্যায়, ১৯৪৪ : ৩৮৭-৩৮৮) That is, “At that very moment I realised that Lenin represented the step next to Marx's...I became a socialist after so long a time...It is difficult to say whether I would have entered into the circle of socialism or communism, had I not witnessed Lenin's activities in relation to Asia. ...Lenin has a sympathy with the national liberation and political independence of different subjugated countries. Leninism has remained interwoven and integrated with the principle of national liberation since the very beginning. This phenomenon has brought about a thorough revolution in the world of my ideas. Lenin is the maker of a new epoch, a revolutionary, in the realm of the ideas about the relationship of the master and the servant or of the ruling races and the ones subjugated by them.” (Sarkar in Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 387-388 ; emphasis added).

Sarkar admitted that he did not read much about socialism, communism or Marx during his career as a student in the Presidency College between 1901 and 1906. There was no room for discussion of socialism or Marxism in the precincts of the Dawn Society either (see Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 382-384). Sarkar came to read an article on Marx by Hardayal, a revolutionary of the Punjab, which was sent by the writer from the United States for its publication in the *Modern Review* (1912 Mar.) edited by Ramananda Chatterjee. It appeared to him the first ever article on Marx written by an Indian writer. But its impact on him was limited.

Sarkar had a serious introduction to the ideas of Marx and socialism for the first time in the months from May to November in 1914 when he spent his time in the United Kingdom. He got, by chance, Ramsay Macdonald, the

British labour leader, as his guide in the matter. He had the opportunity to visit and “see” different centres in England, Scotland and Ireland in the accompaniment of Ramsay Macdonald and his comrades. In this way, he gradually came to develop a socialist outlook (*ibid* : 386). And, the evidence of his thinking about socialism, labour problems, labour movement is discernible in his writings that appeared afterwards, for example, in *Ingrajer Janmabhumi* and other articles and books published in the series of *Varttaman Jagat* or Modern World. Sarkar thus rendered a great service to the Bengali readers in getting them acquainted with the ideas of socialism and thoughts about labour problems and labour movements. In 1924 he translated into Bengali two works (Sarkar, 1924 and 1924a) which were considered important in the Marxist circles.

What Sarkar wrote in the translator’s introduction to the two pieces (1924, 1924a) mentioned above and also in *Ekaler Dhandaulat O Arthasastra* (1935 : 341-343) reveals that he was well aware of the basic ideas of Marx, Engels and Morgan and Lafargue. The following lines by Benoy Kumar will be considered a lucid expression of the rudiments of Marxism : “কার্ল মার্ক্সও গরীবদের প্রতি আপার সহানুভূতি নিয়ে জন্মেছিলেন। কিন্তু তাঁর মড়োটা রুবাট ওয়েল ও সাঁ-সিমোঁ হতে বিভিন্ন ধাতুতে গড়া। গরীবদের অবস্থার উন্নতি আবশ্যক,—কিন্তু তাঁর জন্যে তাঁরা ধনীর সাহায্যে বা সহানুভূতির দিকে চেয়ে থাকবে,—এটা তাঁর কাছে অসহ্য হ’লো। তিনি চাইলেন যে গরীবরা নিজেদেরই পাইর উপর তর দিয়ে দাঁড়য়ে উঠুক। গরীবদের মধ্যে এই স্বাবলম্বনের ভাব জাগাবার জন্য তিনি একটা সূচুন্তির উপর প্রতিষ্ঠিত মতবাদ সংষ্টি করবার জন্য উঠে প’ড়ে লাগলেন। আধুনিক ধনোৎপাদন ও ধনীবতৱণ প্রগালীর বিশ্লেষণ করে তিনি করেকটি সূত্র ধার করলেন। প্রথমতঃ তিনি বললেন যে, যা কিছু উৎপন্ন হয় তা মজবুতদেরই শ্রমের নামাঙ্কন। এটাকে বলা হয় “লেবার থিওরি অব্ ভ্যালিউ”। দ্বিতীয়তঃ তিনি বললেন যে, মজবুতের নিজ মেহনতের মূল্যবর্ত্প যা পাও তাঁর চেয়েও খানিকটা বেশী মাল উৎপন্ন হয়। একে বলা হয় ‘থিওরি অব্ সারপ্লাস ভ্যালিউ’। তৃতীয়তঃ তিনি বললেন যে বর্তমানের ধন-বিতরণের প্রগালীই এমন যে, যারা প্রকৃত ধনোৎপাদক তাঁরা তাদের মেহনতের ফলে উৎপন্ন দ্রব্যের ধূব কম অংশই পাও, আর যারা

জমিজমা কলকষণা বা টাকাকাড়ি থাকার জন্য মজুরদের ওপর কস্তুর করছে তারাই মজুরদের শ্রমের অধিকাংশ ফলটা ভোগ করছে। সুতরাং তার মতটা দাঁড়াচ্ছে এই যে, সমাজে দুই শ্রেণীর লোক আছে। তার মধ্যে এক দল খেতে ধন সম্পদ, উৎপন্ন করছে আর এক দল তার ফলভোগ করছে। প্রথমোন্ত দলকে বলা হয় মজুর, অপর দল হচ্ছে পূর্জিপাতি প্রভৃতি সম্পত্তিওয়ালাদের দল। মার্ক্সের মতে এই দুই শ্রেণীর লোক পরস্পরের চিরশত্রু। ব্যক্তি হিসাবে এরা যতই ভাল হ'ক, বর্তমান ধন-বিতরণের প্রণালীটাই এত জব্বন্য যে, এই দুই শ্রেণীর লোকের মধ্যে সঙ্ঘর্ষ ঘটতে বাধ্য। এরই মানে হচ্ছে ‘ক্লাস-ওয়ার’ (বা শ্রেণী-বিবাদ) অর্থাৎ জাতে-জাতে লড়াই।……তিনি [মার্ক্স] বলেন যে, বর্তমান ধূঁগের রাষ্ট্রটা সম্পত্তিওলা লোকদের বৈঠকখানা বিশেষ অথবা মানিব শ্রেণীরই প্রতিষ্ঠান। বর্তমান ধনগত অসাম্যের পিছনে রয়েছে রাষ্ট্রের শক্তি। রাষ্ট্রই এই অসাম্যটাকে বজায় রাখতে সাহায্য করছে। এইজন্য তিনি চান যে মজুরশ্রেণী সঞ্চয়বন্ধ হয়ে রাষ্ট্রটাকে দখল করুক। রাষ্ট্রটা মজুরদের হস্তগত হলেই ধনসাম্য বজায় রাখবার খণ্টি হিসাবে রাষ্ট্রের অঙ্গস্তুতি আর থাকবে না। রাষ্ট্র তখন আপনা-আপনি শৰ্করাকে নষ্ট হ'য়ে যাবে। এই সম্পর্কে মার্ক্স ঠিক ‘উইদার’ কথাটির জার্মান প্রতিশব্দ ব্যবহার করেছেন। এই হ'ল খণ্টি কামুর্নিজম বা ‘বিজ্ঞানসমত’ সোশ্যালিজ্মের চরম মূল্য” (সরকার, ১৯৩৫ ; ৩৪২-৩৪৩) ।

In other words, Karl Marx sought, according to Sarkar, to devise a system of thought on the basis of analysis of the modern systems of production and distribution of wealth which would enable the labourers or the working people of the world to see the truth and plunge in action to put an end to their misery. Marx discovered a number of principles underlying the modern, capitalist production-and distribution-systems : First comes his ‘labour theory of value’, according to which labour is the creator of value (or everything that is produced on earth). Secondly, according to his ‘theory of surplus value’ the labourers always produce more than what they receive in exchange of their labour. Thirdly, the nature of the present system of distribution of wealth is such that the actual producer of wealth gets a very small portion of the goods produced through their labour, while the lion’s share of the same goes to those who because of their ownership of land,

machinery and money (i. e. , capital) lord over the labouring class. Thus in present day societies there are two classes : one is constituted by those who actually put in labour and produce wealth and the other consists of those who expropriate the fruits of their labour. The former is the labourers and the latter is the property-owning class. These two classes are perpetual enemies of each other and “class-war” or the war between these two classes is inevitable. According to Marx, the property-owning classes maintain themslvies in power and perpetuate the inequality of wealth through the organisation of the state and the labourer-class should, therefore, organize themselves for seizure of state-power. Once the state is seized by the labouring class, the state will outlive its necessity as a plank for maintaining the hitherto existing balance of wealth (rather, inequality of wealth). It will antomatically become sapless. As aptly put in English, “The state will wither away”. In this connection Marx used, in the judgment of Sarkar, “the exact German synonymn of the word, wither” (Sarkar, 1935 : 343).

Again, back in 1924, in the introduction to his Bengali translation of Engels' work on the Origin of Family and Private Property, Sarkar wrote, “The writings of the German scholar, Friedrich Engels, are not unknown to the students of economics in India. *The Condition of the Working Class in England* by Engels was published in 1845. Scholars interested in the economic condition of the people at the family level (i.e., in family budget) and other economic facts are greatly indebted to this volume by Engels...Engels enjoys an important place in German social thought. In the social philosophy of the nineteenth century two German jews became renowned in Eur-America. One of them was Karl Marx (1818-1883) (iii)...The first meeting of Marx and Engels took place in 1844 (v)...They conjointly published in 1847 *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* for the proletariat of the world (v)..... In *Das Kapital*, Karl Marx presented a scathing critique of the then prevalent (i. e., capitalist) poltical economy. The first volume of the work was published in 1867 (vi)...Engels

looked after the publications of the second volume in 1885 and the third volume in 1894 (vi)...Engels is being shown respect wherever Marx is mentioned as the prophet of the age" (Sarkar, 1924a : i-vi ; translated from Bengali). Sarkar further said, "no Indian scholar ever tried to examine the economic, social and political facts of ancient or mediaeval India in the light of the social science introduced by Marx-Morgan (xii)...during the last twenty years high class Eur-American works on economics, political science and social science are being introduced to young India, but nobody in Bengal or India ever tried to analyse the old age of India or the evolution of the civilisation with economic tools (xiii)..... It is a bit difficult for the Indians to digest economic interpretation of history (xvi). For,...our leaders had for the last two generations taught that in Hindu or Muslim period the people [of India] had been totally indifferent to worldly affairs. They had been totally absorbed in thinking about the other world" (xvii)...(ibid. : xii-xvii) ; translated from Bengali).

Benoj Kumar remarked, "জগতের পদ্ধতেরা ভৌতিক ধর্মের ইচ্ছং সহজে দিতে রাজি নন। সেই সকল অধ্যাঘানিষ্ঠ একবগ্গা পদ্ধতের এক-দেশদর্শতা ধর্মস করিবার জন্য সভ্যতার আর্থিক ব্যাখ্যার, এমন কি সময় সময় এক-বগগা আর্থিক ব্যাখ্যারও, প্রয়োজন আছে।...ভৌবিষ্য ভারতকে কোন্ পথে চালাইলে কত চালে কিম্তীমাণ হইবে তাহার অনেক সঙ্কেতই এই আর্থিক-ব্যাখ্যা-সমিক্ষিত ইতিহাস-বিজ্ঞানের আলোচনায় পরিষ্কার হইয়া আসিবে।...এঙ্গেলসের গ্রন্থে বাঙালী পাঠক নবীন ইতিহাস-বিজ্ঞানের রস এক খাঁটি ফোয়ারার স্নোতেই—বস্তুতঃ স্বরং ভগীরথের তত্ত্বাবধানেই—চার্থস্না দৈখবার সুযোগ পাইবেন" (সরকার, ১৯২৪-পৰিৱার, গোষ্ঠী ও রাষ্ট্র : xxv & xxvi)।

That is, "Scholars in today's world are not at all willing to accord recognition to the philosophy of materialism. The economic interpretation of history, sometimes even a 'monistically' economic interpretation, is required to counteract or destroy the one-sidedness of these stubbornly 'spiritualist' scholars...Many suggestions regarding the way in

which India of the future should be directed for the attainment of her goals and the steps to be taken for the purpose will be available from a discussion of this science of history based on economic interpretation (ibid. : xxv)...The Bengali readers will have in the volume by Engels a taste of this new science of history fresh from the source—indeed, under the supervision of the Bhagirath, i. e., the harbinger, of the stream of thought enriching it” (ibid. : xxvi). Sarkar noted that the basic principles of materialistic interpretation (“ভৌতিক ব্যাখ্যা”) of history were first propagated in *Das Kommunistische Manifest* in 1867 (ibid : xxi) and that Engels followed the desire of Marx and his mode of analysis in writing *Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staates* (ibid. : vi). Sarkar titled his Bengali translation of Engels’ work *Parivar, Goshthi O Rashtra*, since Engels discussed, according to him, the history of Family and Marriage, Gens and State in it. He continued, “নিজস্ব বা ব্যক্তিগত সম্পত্তির উৎপত্তি গ্রন্থে মুখ্য কথা নয় বটে, কিন্তু এই বিষয়ই এঙ্গেলসের ‘প্রাণের কথা’। সেই প্রাণের কথাটা গ্রন্থের প্রত্যেক অধ্যায়ের মেখানে সেখানে পাঠকের কান স্পash করে। বস্তুতঃ ধনদৌলতের আকার-প্রকার মানবজাতির শৈশব-কালে কখন্ কেন ও কিরণ্পতায়ে বদ্লাইয়াছে তাহার আলোচনা করাই এঙ্গেলসের উদ্দেশ্য ছিল। আর্থিক ইতিহাসের কোন্ ভরে ব্যক্তিগত ধন-দৌলতের সংষ্টি হইয়াছে, সে কথা এই গ্রন্থে অতি উজ্জ্বল অঙ্কের বিষ্ট হইয়াছে” (তদেব : viii) That is, “True it is that the origin of private property is not the main theme of the work, but this very theme is ‘dear to the soul’ of Engels and declares itself in almost every chapter in the volume. Indeed, the chief purpose of Engels was to discuss whence, why and how the form and nature of wealth and property changed in the earlier stages of man’s development. The book describes in clear terms at which stage of economic evolution private property emerged” (ibid. : viii)

There are further evidences of Sarkar’s understanding of the exploitative effects of the unequal distribution of wealth on society. For example, in his analysis of the communal problem between the Hindus and the Muslims he rejected any categorisation of interests according to religious divisions in the

sphere of economic activities like earning and spending “My opinion is of on entirely different type...An index number never makes any difference between a man with beard and a man with a small bunch of long hair at the back-centre of head called tiki...if there is any disunity...it is in the level of living. You are better-fed and better-clad and you live in a good house ; I am living a hated and insignificant way of life. Here is the disunity. In other words, disunity is between the rich and the poor, between workers and owners, between peasants and zemindars, between clerks and proprietors. There is no disunity between one religion and the other ; disunity exists in economic and social life” (quoted in Bhattacharya & Bhattacharya, op. cit. : 77). Such an evaluation of the Hindu-Muslim problem in Bengal appears well in accord with the analyses of the same by many a Marxist scholar (see, for example, Sarkar, 1973 : 515 ; Desai, 1976 : 407-431).

Benoy kumar rejected the “Two Nations”theory advocating one State for the Hindus and the other for the Muslims. He failed to accept the “religionistic determinism or interpretation of personality and culture” (Sarkar, 1942 : 336) underlying such a theory. In his inimitable style he wrote, “The condition in which the Muslim as a human personality is nothing but a Muslim and in which the Hindu as a human personality is nothing but a Hindu is, as almost everybody is aware, not the reality of the present social polity in Bengal. Nor is it likely to be so in the future” (ibid. : 338). He wondered “as to why it is being considered utterly impossible for Muslims as ‘political animals’ to live with Hindus as they have been living for ages in the same linguistic cultural and socio-economic *milieux*” (ibid. : 340).

Sarkar admitted, of course, that between the Hindus and Mussalmans of Bengal “there is...a‘lag’ or distance, first in educationl attainments and, secondly, in government or semi-government jobs” (ibid. : 337). Simultaneously he was optimistic of bridging up the “socio-cultural lag” in two or three decades. What was necessary was “a wise planning of

the administrative jobs and educational facilities conducted by Hindus and Muslims in combination with a special solicitude for the backwards of all denominations, Muslim as well as non-Muslim" (*idem*).

Benoy Sarkar became equally critical of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League for the monopoly of power and leadership at the hands of the representatives of the privileged sections of the then Indian society and for the virtual exclusion of the suffering majority of the Indian populace from the pale of leadership in both the organizations. "It is only since 1920 that the powers and privileges, the loaves and fishes of Indian politics have been broadcast on a somewhat liberal scale. But humanly speaking, none but the handfuls of landed and industrial bourgeoisie, successful and semi-successful barristers and other members of the legal profession could exploit the situation and monopolize the windfalls in their own favour. It is the family interests of these handfuls who pose as leaders in British India that, as a rule, furnish the programmes of so-called parties, Hindu, non-Hindu, Muslim or non-Muslim. They are almost on a par with the dynastic ambitions or interests of the princes in Indian India. The ideology of the professional leaders of British India, as that of the Maharajas and Nawabs of Indian India, is in the main undemocratic, in spite of certain democratic leavenings in recent years. As soon as the leadership in India filters down to the socially and economically lower orders in substantial proportions the question of the Indian constitution or of Indian freedom will take a new turn such as is undreamt of as much by the Indian National Congress as by the Muslim League" (Sarkar, 1942 : 333).

Sarkar's sensitiveness to the Hindu-Muslim problem and his clear thinking about the same is well brought out in the preceding lines. Sarkar had tried his best to avoid the partition of Bengal in 1905 and he always hoped for the dawning of reason and good sense among the religious fanatics and scheming politicians demanding or conceding to the partition of Bengal and India on religious grounds. But a

few years before the Independence, he had the sad realisation that it was not possible in conditions then prevailing to effectively contain or negate the politics of communalism and *that the politicians at the national level almost resigned themselves to the partition of India on a communal basis.* Sarkar had clearly read the portent much earlier than the plan or decision of the Indian leaders to accept the partition of India was known to the public and hence Sarkar, through an ironical twist of history, came to propose and propagate the idea of partition of Bengal (Pal, op. cit. : 141-149).

To save farther digression on this point, it may be said here that Benoy Kumar was not a revivalist and had a clear reading of the communal problem and he understood that the problem had along with other causes an economic dimension as well.

In his discussions of various other problems he mentioned the role played therein by economic exploitation arising through the inequitous distribution of wealth in societies. In an essay entitled “Duniyar Dhana-Dauratmya” (दुनियार धनदौरात्म्य) Oppression of the Capital in the World), he wrote, “In all countries, in Europe and America, the power of the rich capitalists and businessman is very strong. In every sphere of administration business magnetes are all-in-all. Democracy, Republic, Swaraj or freedom are in essence nothing but mere words. In the concept of the common people there is no difference between a monarchy of the past and a democracy of the present. Previously repression came from the Raja, Nawab and Badshah ; now-a days a despotic rule of the rich has been established...” (Sarkar, 1926 : 58-59).

Benoy Kumar’s remarks regarding the nature of operation of Bourgeois Finance in India in the wake of independence and elsewhere are more radical. He cites a quotation from Pareto’s *Les Systemes Socialistes*, Vol. II (Paris, 1926) : “In certain countries the modern bourgeoisie knows how to usurp the rights of others by fraud, if not by force. It gets itself paid by the citizens through varied premia on certain products. It obtains the protective duties on manufactures. Vast

parliamentary swindlers are organized by it...Finally, the bourgeoisie has recourse to stock-jobbings of all forms in order to appropriate the goods of others." This description of the financial methods of modern bourgeoisie may, according to Sarkar, apply with some force to many individuals, groups, institutions and movements in India as well.

Sarkar maintained, "The role of bourgeois bribery and corruption in international diplomacy is not negligible. Many of the wars fought in the name of national honour, racial prestige, cultural freedom, etc., are very often undertaken against the will, interests and sentiments of the peoples concerned. The chief incentive in such instances is the gold offered to the dozens of the leading statesmen and business magnates by some interested powers, whose strategic plans require that the particular peoples must somehow organize a battle-front, no matter whether there is any the least reasonable chance for success or not. These statesmen and business magnates become thereby responsible for the destruction of property worth millions and the bloodshed of thousands of men, women and children. The middle classes, the poorer classes, the peasants, the workingmen and the soldiers are sacrificed not at the altar of liberty but at that of the greed of the leaders, many of whom are seasoned municipal and parliamentary bosses" (Sarkar, 1949 : 68-69).

"Some of the trends of bourgeois finance indicated here," Sarkar continued, "may perhaps be verified by an intensive and realistic Battle of Calcutta in August 1946. The partition of Bharatvarsha into India and Pakistan (August 1947) was perhaps neither a necessity of Hindu masses as such nor of Muslim masses as such. It may have been brought about to a considerable extent by the play of bourgeois economy among Anglo-American groups as well as Hindus and Muslims. Circumstances connected with the Kashmir and Hyderabad wars (1948) are neither purely Hindu-Muslim, nor Indo-Pakistani phenomena. In the creation of these two battle-fronts it is the spirit of the bourgeois, both Asian and Euro-American, that is conspicuously operative..."

Although relatively primitive, the Hindus and Muslims of Bharatvarsha are not immune to bourgeois attitudes and tendencies or methodologies of bourgeois finance...And...the psycho-social *Gestalt* of their publicists and economic statesmen is today almost a replica of that of the Western" (ibid. : 69). Sarkar further elaborated his analysis of the working of the bourgeoisie in the social, economic and cultural spheres in India and the world at large (ibid. : 69-74).

Even a casual reader would discover the striking similarity of Sarkar's dissection of communalism and other socio-economic and cultural problems (Sarkar, 1942 & 1949 :63-74) created and exacerbated by the bourgeoisie in India, prior to as well as after the Independence, and the modern world with the analyses of the same by the Marxist sociologists like A. R. Desai (see Desai, 1976 : 407-431, 440-441 ; also Desai, 1983). Like Desai (1976 : 440-441), Sarkar too felt that "In Bharatvarsha also this [bourgeois] character or personality is quite in evidence. And this type of hard-headed as well as heartless 'economic man' has been growing in numbers since the World War II (1939-45) ushered into being legion of profiteers, inflation-millionnaires, ration administrators, black market-inspectors, control agents, preachers of business morality, and exponents of moral re-armament" (1949 : 71).

The Marxist scholars may observe many other points of agreement in Sarkar's analyses of the Indian and world socio-economic scenario of his times. Thus, many of them would find Sarkar's critical appreciation of M.K.Gandhi's philosophy, methods of work and his role in Indian and world politics (ibid. : 95-107) acceptable to a considerable extent. Gandhiji was, in Sarkar's opinion, the acclaimed hero of India, Asia, and of all oppressed races or nationalities (ibid. : 98). Sarkar appreciated the value and utility of Gandhiji's non-violence, emphasis on village handicrafts, manual labour, etc., and the part played by Gandhiji in Indians struggle for freedom. "Gandhi's patriotism and public life would remain, according to him, one of the most marvellous achievements of Creative India" (ibid. : 107). At the same time he noted how Gandhiji

deviated from his avowed principles in response to the demands of harsh reality and the resultant contradictions in him. For instance, in spite of his obsession with “anti-machinism, manualism, etc., Gandhi could function as the guide-philosopher-friend of industrialists, engineers, chemists, managers of mammoth factories, directors of large workshops... “It is during the epoch of Gandhism (1920-48) that machinism, technocracy, industrialization, rationalization and so forth have got the greatest fillip in India, sometimes under the auspices of Gandhi’s own *bhaktas*, devotees and lieutenants” (*ibid.* : 105). Further, “A ‘naked fakir’ although, Gandhi found it convenient to be served by the bourgeoisie of all types, zamindari, industrial and commercial. He was not obscurantist enough to boycott millionaires and multimillionaires, Indian, Asian, African as well as Eur-American in his daily interhuman pattern. He did not make a speciality of hobnobbing exclusively with the have-nots, domestic servants, hungry clerks, semi-starved intellectuals, and the industrial proletariat” (*ibid.* : 106).

XVI

Is, then, a reader of Sarkar’s works justified in calling him a Marxist? To this Sarkar’s answer was “...আমি মার্ক্সিজ্মের নই,—মার্ক্স-প্রচারক মাত্র!” (সরকারের উত্তি—মুখ্যোপাধ্যায়, ১৯৪৪ : ২৪৬), that is, “I am not a Marxist but only a disseminator of the ideas of Marx (Sarkar in Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 246). Sarkar could not accept many ideas of Marx (Sarkar, 1924a : xvii, xxvii, xxiv-xxv ; 1935 : 353-54, 520-21, 528 ; 1936 : 2, 12 ; 1937 : 52, 436 ; 1937a : 11, 23, 278, 437 ; 1941 : 2, 12, 16, 124, 127, 130-31, 210, 239-41, 591 ; 1944 : 71-72, 95, 246, 387, 389, 558). It is somewhat interesting that Bhattacharyaya and Bhattacharyaya (1981) did not at all mention this reaction of Sarkar to Marxism, while they dwelt at length on Sarkar’s contribution to the spread of Marxist ideas in Bengali and his criticism of the capitalist system of inequitable distribution of wealth and oppression of the poor by the rich in society.

Marx and the Marxists appeared to Sarkar to be “economic *advaitavadins* (monists) and determinists” who had “excluded all non-economic ideologies from their progress-pattern and world-view” (Sarkar, 1941 : 124). Sarkar observed in his inimitable style “মার্ক্সের দর্শন” (কম-সে-কম্ মার্ক্স পন্থীদের দর্শন) মিভূল নয়। আঘাত আইতকে গঁড়ো ক’রে দেওয়া মার্ক্সের ক্যার্দানী সম্বেহ নেই। কিন্তু তার জায়গাম মার্ক্স বা মার্ক্স-পন্থীরা বসালে প্রকৃতির অবৈত্তি...যে কোনো অবৈত্তবাদের যথ আমি।...মার্ক্স অথবা মার্ক্স-পন্থীরা বলে একবগ্না চরম ধরণের কথা। তাদের বিচারে... উৎকর্ষের, সংস্কৃতির আর সভ্যতার সব-কিছু চিরকাল নিয়ন্ত্রিত হয়ে এসেছে আর্থিক শক্তির দ্বারা। এইসব মতামতের আবহাওয়ায় আমি দেখতে পাই আর্থিক অবৈত্তের আঞ্চলিক। অতএব লাগাও লড়াই।” (সরকারের উক্তি, মুখ্যপাঠ্য, ১৯৪৪ : ৫৫৮—৫৫৯)। That is, “Marx’s philosophy (at least, the philosophy of the Marxists) is not free from errors. To demolish the monism of spirit was undoubtedly an accomplishment of Marx. But Marx and Marxism replaced it by the monism of nature or matter, the monism of the material world, the monism of wealth and capital. I am an arch enemy of every kind of monism...But Marx or the Marxists propagate monistic views of an extreme nature. In their judgment...everything in man’s excellence, culture and civilization has ever been determined by the economic forces. I find the display of uncompromising, economic monism in the climate of such opinions. Hence my fight against them” (Sarkar in Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 558-59).

Marx’s notion of class appeared to Sarkar to imply “an organization with a dogmatic ideology, economic, political or cultural” (1941 : 210) and was unacceptable to him. The dichotomous division of classes into the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, as envisaged in *The Communist Manifesto* did not, in his opinion, reflect the reality. The bourgeois consciousness or mentality which is, according to him, based on income differentiation and on a sense of superiority and a consequent urge for a distinctive or differential interhuman (i.e., social) behaviour is not the exclusive property of any particular class. (ibid. : 240).

Marx's idea of class consciousness appeared, therefore, untenable to Sarkar (*ibid.* : 210, 240-241).

In raising these points of criticism against Marx and the Marxists, Sarkar appears to have been heavily influenced by Pitirim Sorokin's critique of Marx's ideas (cf. Sorokin, 1956 : 527 ff.)

In one of his works Sarkar presents a summary of Sorokin's ideas (*Sarkar, 1935 : 520 ff.*) and then registers his total agreement with the points by Sorokin : “মার্কস এঙ্গেলসের ‘আধীথ’ক ব্যাখ্যা” অন্বেতবাদের জন্মস্থ প্রতিমূর্তি। এই অন্বেতবাদ যে ঘৃষ্ণিহীন তাহা এঙ্গেলস-প্রণীত গ্রন্থের বাংলা তচ্ছমার ভূমিকায় বর্তমান লেখক কর্তৃক স্পষ্টভাষ্যিত বলিল্লা দেওয়া আছে।” (*সরকার, ১৯৩৫ ৫২৮—৫২৯*), that is, “The ‘economic interpretation’ by Marx and Engels is a glaring example of monism. That this monism is irrational has been clearly laid down in the introduction to the Bengali translation of Engels' work by the present author” (*ibid.* : 528-529).

Sarkar was an apostle of “creative individualism” (*Sarkar, 1941 : 127-132*). The “creative individual's liberty of choice and freedom of action” might be influenced but were never determined by the economic forces and circumstances. “The individual is not perpetually at the mercy of the economic forces as the Marxists believe. He can control them, combat them, influence them and transcend them too” (*ibid.* : 127)

The history of human culture and civilisation is, in Sarkar's opinion, the history of “creative disequilibrium”. That is, ever-perfectible man advances through higher and higher stages of perfection through an infinite process of struggle against an unending variety of defects and shortcomings, difficulties and trying situations. There is no finality of the process, which Marx appeared to Sarkar to have suggested in his prophecy regarding the advent of a classless society characterized by the withering away of the state after the revolution that would put an end to all exploitation. “A theory of progress which postulates or demonstrates the last stage of human perfectibility on the Hegelian or Marxist

basis is [therefore] further removed from my conception” (*ibid.* : 519-520).

Sarkar's initial enthusiasm over Bolshevik Russia faded a little with the passage of time (compare Sarkar, 1922 with Sarkar, 1941). He noted, along with the achievements of the Bolshevik regime in Russia, its points of weakness also, particularly, its despotocracy, curtailment of individual freedom and liquidation of scores of recalcitrant citizens, failure in abolishing inequality, inability to check corruption and other social vices, chauvinistic or imperialistic tendencies, and vulnerability to bourgeois mentality (Sarkar, 1941 : 591-593, 608ff; 1949 : 73-74).

He exhorted, nonetheless, the Indian scholars to spend years of investigations in the villages and towns of Soviet Russia to have a first hand experience of the “economic social and political patterns of communism” and not to rely on reports by others about Bolshevik Russia. Many of these reports were, he suspected, coloured by the subjective considerations of those who reported about the Bolshevik regime. Sarkar advised the Indian scholars to “learn to read and speak the Russian language” for the purpose.

XVII

Did this ambivalence in Sarkar's attitude towards the Bolshevik regime in Russia indicate the tension and predicament of a liberal intellectual of a poor country under a colonial regime ? Sarkar was undoubtedly a liberal, judged by the token of liberalism as specified by Nisbet : “The hallmark of liberalism is devotion to the individual, especially to his political, civil and then increasingly his social rights. What tradition is to the conservative, use of power is to the radical, individual autonomy is to the liberal” (1973 : 10). Individual autonomy and freedom was dear to his soul and he would brook no curtailment of it. He declared to the Youth of awakening Bengal, “বাংলাদেশে আজ আমি এক সঙ্গে পাঁচ হাজার ভিন্ন ভিন্ন কর্মকল্প দৈখিতে চাহি, পাঁচ হাজার দল, পাঁচ হাজার কাগজ, পাঁচ হাজার আঞ্চ-কন্ট্ৰফণীল নৱ-নাবী, পাঁচ হাজার পৰম্পৰ-টক্কৰফণীল

প্রাতিষ্ঠান দোধতে চাই। নব্য-ন্যায় চাহে ব্যক্তিমাত্রের স্বাধীনতা, স্বাক্ষর আৱ ব্যক্তিত্ব—কাজেই লক্ষ লক্ষ দলাদলি আৱ সংঘ-গঠন।...চলুক এ সব স্বতন্ত্রতাৱ আন্দোলন। আমিই একমাত্র বা ত্ৰুটীমই একমাত্র স্বাধীনতা আৱ আঘাকৃত্তি ভোগ কৰিব কেন?” (সৱকাৰ, ১৯৩২ নয়া বাঙলাৰ গোড়া পত্ৰন ২য় খণ্ড : ১৫২-১৫৩), that is, “I want to see in Bengal of today the blooming of five thousand different centres of activity, five thousand groups and parties, five thousand journals and newspapers, five thousand autonomous or self-governed men and women, five thousand organisations vying with one another. Navya-Nyaya or the logic of the new era demands freedom, autonomy and dignity for every individual and hence a plethora of activities leading to the formation of parties and associations legion.....Let all these movements for autonomy and identity continue uninterruptedlly. Why should it be that I or you only will enjoy freedom and autonomy to the exclusion of all others?” (Sarker, 1932 : 152-153). At the same time he wanted an end to the strife and misery of the millions of the hapless poor and haled, therefore, the abolition of private property which appeared to him a possible source of this misery : “The realization of...the fusion of freedom with the abolition of private profits may take generations. But the abolition of private profits is such a remarkable discovery in the field of human values that mankind will go on making experiments on this basis until some sort of *rapprochement* is effected with large or small doses of individual initiative, freedom and personality” (Sarker, 1941 : 611-612). Sarker thus appeared to be an eclectic or a syncretist who wanted to combine the best of both the worlds—the socialist and the bourgeois-democratic.

One may find in Sarker’s writings the aspirations as well as the dilemma of a colonised country or an erstwhile colony which sought rapid economic development and, therefore, aid from diverse countries that might have differing and sometimes opposing ideologies but could not totally eschew the profession of an egalitarian ideology promising an end to the inequities within.

Poverty and economic backwardness appeared to the liberal nationalist in Sarkar the most pressing problem of colonised India and he held the absence of capital chiefly responsible for it. "Poverty is by all means a curse and the poor man is not a blessed creature. There is nothing to be proud of or glorify in poverty. *The despotism of the richer classes will have to be combated in every way*" (Sarkar in app X to Dass, 1940 : 639—originally published as "The Sociology of the Poor and the Pariah" in *Man in India*, July 1940 ; emphasis added). The emphasized portion of the preceding statement by Sarkar indicates that he was not unaware of that poverty was the consequence of exploitation by the rich and also that he *had not been consistent in refusing*, as is suggested by Mukhopadhyay following Subodh Krishna Ghoshal, 'to look at Indian poverty in terms of inequitable distribution and class exploitation' (Mukhopadhyay, 1974 : 68 and Ghoshal, "Sarkarism : The Ideas of Benoy Sarkar on Man and His Conquests" (257-313) in Dass (ed), 1940 : 295). It can, however, hardly be denied that Sarkar considered the dearth of capital a more direct cause of poverty in India than the exploitation by the propertied minority of the majority. "Poverty in India is," according to Sarkar, "not so much a resultant of inequities in the distribution of wealth as of the dearth or want of creative occupation" (Sarkar in Vol. I of *Economic Development*, Madras, 1926 : 392—quoted by Ghoshal in Dass (ed), op. cit. : 295).

The way out lay in creating myriads of employments, professions and careers. In his "Scheme of Economic Development for Young India" in the *Modern Review* in July 1925 Sarkar suggested, "Let the economic activities of the people grow in multiplicity and naturally also in diversity, i. e., let the production of wealth increase on all fronts and millions of men and women will automatically begin to function as industrial workers and thousands of engineers, chemists, bank-managers insurance agents, office-clerks and what not" (Quoted in Ghoshal, op. cit. : 295-296). "In other words", continued Sarkar, "industrialism is the cure for poverty, for it is nothing

but industrialism that is presupposed by this great consummation" (*ibid.* : 296). The development of industries would relieve agriculture in India of the burden of maintaining the teeming millions, enable the handicrafts to overcome their "primitiveness" and rise to the level of subsidiary industries to large and medium production and promote individuality, manhood, democracy, political self-consciousness and economic energism. Since huge amount of capital would be necessary to facilitate industrial development, India would have to approach the bankers and financiers in other parts of the world.

Advocating a rapid industrial growth or, as one might say, capitalist growth in India Sarkar pronounced his Economic Creed in the following manner :

"Our slogan is two-fold. First we believe in the industrialization of India by hook or by crook,—even at break-neck speed if possible. Industrialization is with us a comprehensive category. It does not imply simply the promotion of company-managed and machine-driven factories and workshops of medium or large scale. It is wide enough in our parlance to comprise not only the modernization of agriculture and rationalization of internal trade methods by adequate banking and insurance facilities, etc., but the promotion of international trade under Indian auspices as well as the updatation of rural handicrafts and small industries as well.

Secondly, the influx of British and other external capital is in our financial thinking a most powerful aid to India's progress in capitalism and technocracy as well as cultural advance and societal reconstruction. That for a long time to come our *Swadeshi* capital is bound to play a second fiddle in our material and moral welfare enterprises belongs to the A. B. C. of economic statesmanship conceived by us. Indian banks, insurance institutions and other financial companies are to be fostered and protected by all means. But efforts are at the same time to be made to facilitate the import of foreign finance in adequate doses and *on reasonable terms*" (Sarkar's Editorial Note to the first number of the *Indian*

Commercial and Statistical Review, July 1934; quoted by Satindra Nath DasGupta in "Some Economic Teachings of Benoy Sarkar" in Dass (ed.), 1940 : 93; emphasis added). While welcoming foreign capital to India, the nationalist in Sarkar did not forget to caution the Indians against "unreasonable terms" which might accompany the foreign capital. Sarkar supported the infusion of foreign capital into the economy of India for an immediate utilization of her resources. He was impatient with the idea that "it would be to the permanent good of the country to allow petroleum to remain underground and gold to rest in the bowls of the earth until the gradual regeneration of the country enables her own industrialists to raise them and get the profits of the industries" (Quoted by Ghoshal, op. cit. : 297). At the same time he constantly and consistently encouraged the development of indigenous capital. Any class of people that would contribute to its development earned his appreciation—even the small farmer or clerk or factory worker could contribute his mite to its growth (Sarkar, "Socialism, Capitalism and National Welfare" in the *Arthik Unnati*. (Calcutta), November 1927).

Sarkar's appreciation of the Zamindars in Bengal has already been referred to. No doubt, Sarkar's personal friendship with some of them and his admiration for their "public spirit" as evidenced in their philanthropic and "social service" activities were responsible for it (see P. K. Mukherjee's "The Economic Services of Zamindars to the Peasants and the Public as Analyzed by Benoy Sarkar" in Dass (ed.), op. cit. : 49-68). One should not, however, miss that a great deal of this appreciation was attributable to what Sarkar thought to be the contribution of the Zamindars to the growth of capital and economic development in the country : "The direct and indirect contributions of the *Zamindars as capitalists* to the development of modern Bengali agriculture, industry, technical skill, and education are embodied in the thousand and one institutions and movements that have made the Bengali people so well-

known in India and the world" (Sarkar in the *Financial Times* (Calcutta), January 1934—quoted by P. K. Mukherjee, op. cit. : 50). Sarkar highlighted that "A great deal of the industrial and commercial ventures of young Bengal since the birth of the glorious *Swadeshi* movement in 1905 has been financed directly and indirectly by the Zamindars" (Sarkar in the *Indian Commercial and Statistical Review* (Calcutta), August 1934—quoted by P. K. Mukherjee, op. cit. : 60). And he hailed the fact that "the traditional landed aristocracy has been partially getting transformed into and swelling the ranks of the new industrial and commercial *bourgeoisie*" (*idem*).

From the above statements by Sarkar one may infer like Mukhopadhyay that the "philosophy" of Benoy Kumar Sarkar embodied "the spirit of a spectacular social transformation that seemed to have gradually set in in his times. That is, his ideas fitted in well with the capitalist transformation of our society.....With the growing consolidation of capitalist society in India the ideational framework of which was given by Benoy Kumar Sarkar Indian intellectuals started feeling more at one with their western counterparts.....It was, indeed, taken for granted that the task of *rebuilding Indian society* could be well attended to *in the light of the historical experiences of bourgeois societies*" (Mukhopadhyay, 1979 13-14; emphasis added). Such an inference does contain a substantive point but it would be as one-sided in its emphasis on Sarkar's advocacy of capitalism in India as is the view of Bhattacharya and Bhattacharya (1981) stressing the socialist leanings in Sarkar.

Did Sarkar unwaveringly support, as is suggested by Mukhopadhyay, the development of the Indian polity and economy along the capitalistic lines? Consider, for example, the following statement by Sarkar: "The fact that India has begun so late in its political career indicates that in industrialization the people are in a position to derive benefit from the experiences and mistakes of the pioneers of modern industry in the West. On the other hand, it is evident also that young India is not enamoured of 1789 nor even of the ideas of 1848 but that while giving them their due in the historical perspec-

tive, it is prepared to bestow a part of its serious thoughts on the latest experiment in freedom and democracy that mankind has undertaken in and through the exploits of Russian idealists" (1922 : 357).

If the ascendancy of bourgeois democracy was a feature of "Young India", "Proletarianism and class-struggle" constituted, according to Sarkar, another important strand in it. Sarkar noted how the *swaraj* (self-rule) movement led to the nourishment of the ideals of liberty, freedom and self-direction and simultaneously to "the social equalization of classes and the inner democratic reorganization of the people" (*ibid* : 353). The intellectual classes started working for the dissemination of "Sanitary rules and laws of health, cooperative credit and consumption, methods of agricultural improvement, and a general lift in the economic and social standard" (*idem*) among village cultivators, or railway workers and miners, factory labourers and lower grade artisans of the towns. Social service rendered by various organisations and prominent leaders to the masses earned Sarkar's approval. "But all these methods are likely to be described as but the traditional tactics of 'bourgeois' democracy. For it is only by such sops to the economically exploited proletariat and socially down-trodden pariah that the masses can be 'rallied' to the intellectuals in their nationalistic warfare against the alien Empire" (*ibid* : 354).

"It is therefore necessary to point out", continued Sarkar, "that the homogeneity of interests and the 'united front' which have been erected by the patriots of Young India must not be interpreted too liberally. The economic class-struggle is already on among the people although in its initial stages" (*idem*).

The unionization of the weavers, laundrymen, sailors, railway-workers, jute and cotton mill hands and miners in different provinces in India for the realization of their demands for "higher wages, shorter hours and better treatment from employers" was, according to Sarkar, an important characteristic of the emerging industrial system in India. "Strikes

are becoming almost a daily phenomenon in the economic system of cities" (*ibid.* : 355).

"Economic warfare is patent likewise in the villages and on the fields and farms. The *kishans* (cultivators) are organizing themselves into unions known as *Kishan-sabhas*" (*idem*). The tenants resented the high taxes, illegitimate taxes, and taxes imposed on them by the landowners. "The revolt of the peasants at Rai Bareilly and their demands in conference in Oudh in which 50,000 persons took part (1920) point to the directions in which the wind is blowing" (*idem*; emphasis added).

The politicians in pre-independence India succeeded, according to Sarkar, in rallying the proletariat to the bourgeoisie and in convincing them of that the famines and epidemics as well as sickness and premature death of the scores of Indians were caused mainly by the hostile policy of the British Raj towards the development of the Indian agriculture, industry and commerce. The politicians did it with the help of intellectuals. "Under the leadership of Gauri Sankar Pandit the peasants, as under that of Baptista the working men, have therefore in open assemblies declared themselves in favour of the political *swaraj* without which the economic salvation, physical energism and moral resurrection of India are understood to be out of question for any class" (*ibid.* : 356).

"Nevertheless," Sarkar pointed out, "there is no rest for the propertied classes...The fact of the awakening of the teeming millions...as members of an economic system is too patent. The employers and landlords know that the employed and the tenants have economic grievances" (*idem*). "And these economic grievances are not", Sarkar continued, "exclusively those for which British capital, commerce and administration are responsible. Indians themselves constitute a class of exploiters" (*idem*; emphasis added). The peasants and workers were gradually losing faith in political shibboleths that the end of the British Raj would be the end of all exploitation. Naturally, "The resistance from the exploited classes is tending to assume the same forms in India as in the west.....

Proletarianism has, moreover, succeeded in enlisting in its favour the thoughts of a rising school of writers who at the present moment in Hindi language have embarked on creating a special Kishan literature" (ibid. : 356-357).

It is evident from the above that Benoy Kumar did not have an unqualified admiration for the capitalists and capitalist path of development in India (cf. s. XV *sup*). Sarkar was painfully aware of the existence of both the facts that the underdeveloped economy in India immediately required a huge amount of capital and the indigenous and foreign capitalists would play a vital role in the supply of this capital and that the capitalists and the capitalist system had their vices too. Time and again, he expressed his strong sympathy with the movements of the working people in farms and factories against the various kinds of exploitation they suffered and, at the same time, acutely felt the need for a sustained development of a certain kind of work-ethic in the country and pined for an atmosphere of consensus between the employers and workers. While he was enamoured of the amazing speed of scientific and technological advancement and economic growth in the capitalist countries like the U. S. A. in the west, he felt attracted also towards the promises of the socialist regimes for founding an egalitarian society. If he appreciated the attempts of the socialists to abolish exploitation of all sorts, he was critical of the excesses done in its name and the curbing of individual liberty in the process. In short, Benoy Kumar was torn by the conflicting ideals of socio-economic development. The arguments that the time of Benoy Kumar Sarkar and his contemporaries was characterised by a certain kind of *syncretism* have been repeated so often that the discussion of the theme has taken on the appearance of a litany. One has to understand the kind of problems and dilemmas that lay at the roots of this syncretism. And, if one pays a close attention to the problems faced by Sarkar in his search for a way to political and economic development of his country, one would realize that they bear a strong resemblance with the trials and

tribulations facing the Indians of today in their attempts at elevating their lot. Sarkar's ideas on the issue will appear to the discerning minds not to have become hopelessly dated but to wear a ring of contemporaneity with the doubts and vacillations which haunt the Indians of modern times in their search for a better future. If Benoy Kumar should be criticised for his wavering and his failure in definitively suggesting a way out of the problems faced by the millions in India and other colonized and under-developed countries of Asia, he should be given his due for correctly hinting at the nature of the problem. "Until foreign domination is overthrown, the socialists and labour leaders of Asia must have to advocate the tenets of nationalism, backed by indigenous capitalism if need be. Asia's struggle with her own capitalists is of course *not* in abeyance for the present but will be accelerated as soon as the foreign incubus is subverted" (*ibid.* : 32). Did the later developments belie what was prophesied in the statement ?

XVIII

Sarkar's equivocality was bred mainly by his intense nationalism, though his sense of uncertainties regarding whether any particular path would be an unmixed blessing was partly responsible for it. He always judged a policy or an action of a country solely in terms of "enlightened national interests" of his countrymen. His utterances (which appeared at times contradictory) on Germany, Italy, Soviet Russia and also Great Britain over and again indicated that. A further and more illustrative case in point would be found in his assessment of the policies and actions of the U. S. A. He looked upon the U. S. A. as the champion of democracy and liberty and a veritable source of help for India's political independence and economic development. This did not prevent him from criticising the U. S. Immigration laws relating to the Asian immigrant labour and America's hesitant support for the struggle of the Asian nationalities for indepen-

dence in an article, viz. "Americanization from the viewpoint of Young Asia" in the *Journal of International Relations* of the Clark University in the U. S. A. It was reproduced in the *Futurism of Young Asia* (Sarkar, 1922 : see pp. 48-73 ; reproduced also in Dass, op. cit. : 316-336).

Sarkar noticed a naked display of race-prejudice in the discrimination made between the Asian and European immigrants in the immigration laws of the United States.

Marshalling a huge amount of data from the census and other official reports of the American Government and books by the American authors themselves, Sarkar convincingly demonstrated that (i) according to the U. S. Census 1910, Asia furnished only 1·4% of the foreign-born population in the U. S. A. and Europe 87·2% ; (ii) while the number of European immigrants in the U. S. A. had been steadily on the increase since then, that of the Asian immigrants had steadily declined, almost in an inverse ratio. Sarkar appreciated that the chief objection regarding the immigrants "consists in the natural desire of the native workman to close the labor-market to foreign competitors" (*ibid.* : 64). He also understood that immigration to the U. S. A. was prompted not so much by the country's hospitality to the political refugees, liberators and revolutionaries as by the economic cause originating in the pressure of population on the means of subsistence in the lands of the immigrants, whether they came from Asia or from Europe. "But why is it that the identical anti-foreign sentiment of the labour unions has not led to identical anti-foreign propaganda and anti-foreign legislation ?" (*idem*). He noted with agony how one group of foreigners, i. e., the Asians—the Japanese, Chinese and Indian—were isolated, tortured, and legislated out of the country, while at the same time there were deliberate efforts to educate, adopt and assimilate another group of "equally (if not more) obnoxious 'Dragoes'" , i. e., the European immigrants into the U. S. A. Through an incisive analysis of the ways in which the Japanese and the Chinese and also the Indians were made to suffer ostracization,

assault, humiliation and persecution in America (and he collected the data from the works by the American authors themselves), he had the grim realization that "The New Worlders have chosen to be hospitable to the hungry flocks from Europe, but when Asia is at the door crying for bread they have grimly determined to offer only stones" (*ibid.* : 54).

Sarkar enquired into the nature of the "cultural outfit" of the European immigrants in order to see whether the conditions of American agriculture, manufacture and transportation were more peculiarly suited to the habits of life, "genius" and temperament of the European masses than those of the Asian labouring classes. And, no positive answer emerged out of this enquiry. Most of the European immigrants came from the poor and backward countryside of different nations in Europe. "To America, therefore, these guests from Europe can but contribute their primitive midwifery, agricultural superstition, high birthrate and rural ignorance" (*ibid.* : 57). The interests of the labouring classes in the U. S. A. which in particular showed a peculiar anxiety over the influx (?) of the Asian immigrants were jeopardised no less by these hundreds of the European immigrant labour. "These are the people that are easily duped by the 'managers' of political parties, and materially help lowering the public life. They can be handled without trouble by employers and captains of industry and are pounced upon by capitalists to be exploited as tools in the breaking up of strikes. They thus militate against the effectiveness of workingmen's associations. They spoil the labor market and demoralize the proletariat class. In all respects they embody an enormous drag and dead weight upon America's advance in civilization, democracy, and efficiency" (*ibid.* : 57-58). If they could find a place in the "melting pot" of the American culture and society, why was the same denied to their Asian brethren? Sarkar asked, "...are the social and moral values of American life likely to deteriorate less through the influx of Occidental medievalism, nescience, boorishness and serfdom than through that of the Oriental?" (*ibid.* : 58) He failed to discover any rationale behind the discrimination

against the Asian immigrants. The only fundamental differentium between the Asian and the European labour lay probably in their colour differences. "The Asian is yellow and brown, the European is albino, i. e., colourless or white" (*ibid* : 64). By passing the restrictive Immigration Acts against the Asians, the U. S. A. Government only pandered to the racial prejudice of the American masses against the non-white. Sarkar took a very serious view of this "drastic, inhuman, discriminative (and hence unjust)" action. "It is America's *ultimatum* to the Orient...For, the present situation is virtually a standing challenge to Young Asia to venture on opening the doors of America in the same manner in which China and Japan were opened by the Eur-Americans during the middle of the nineteenth century. This affront is constantly provoking the humiliated and embittered Asians to demonstrate to the world that the edge of the Damascus blades has not been dulled for good" (*ibid* : 50). Sarkar's statement presaged what Ronald Segal found to be the reality more than four decades later. "In a world where the white rich seek to preserve an order against which the coloured poor rebel, the central fact of the past will increasingly be seen as the domination of the one by the other, just as the central fact of the future will increasingly emerge as the struggle between them" (Segal, 1967 : 9).

Sarkar's criticism of the U. S. immigration policy towards the Asians was, however, immediately moderated by his appreciation of that the oppressed nations in Asia would require the support of the U. S. A. in their struggle against the British empire. "Although the United States has helped the imperialistic nations of Europe to maintain and expand their dependencies in Asia as the chief result of the war, it was paradoxically enough during the war that America's name became a household word in Asia as the friend of freedom for peoples who are still subject to foreign nations" (Sarkar, 1922 : 67). President Wilson's espousal of the right of self-determination of different nations inspired the submerged nationalities in Europe as well as in Asia. America's advocacy

of the "freedom of the sea" was understood by the Asians to imply the deliverance of the world from the military, naval and mercantile domination of the seas by Great Britain. "Whether or not the United States was destined to be a hammer to smite Prussianism, she was fated to be, thus felt the idealists of the Orient, a most powerful curb and bridle on the imperialism of England" (*ibid.* : 67-68). The nationalist leaders in India, indeed, took advantage of the situation by dispatching to President Wilson himself a formally drafted memorandum in regard to the question of self-direction for India in 1918.

Sarkar visualized change in the attitude of the U. S. A. towards the Asians. The fast expanding economy of the United States required an enlarged world market which might be provided by the countries in Asia. America's discriminatory policies against the Asians might invite Asia's retaliation in the form of an economic boycott of the U. S. A. The American enterprise could not afford that. The U. S. A. would, therefore, hoped Sarkar, try to woo the Asian countries. And the U. S. A. would succeed in it without any difficulty. For, "America's place in Asian consciousness is not...all conditioned by her treatment of the Oriental immigration question...America has succeeded in winning the heart of Asia simply because of her traditional love of freedom and democracy as well as her innate open-mindedness and receptivity to new ideas" (*ibid* : 67). The nationalities in Asia looked forward to America for her guidance, active help, and cooperation in bringing a free Asia into being. "That consummation—*Swaraj* of Asia—would be the greatest bulwark of international peace and the surest safeguard of the world's democracy. Abraham Lincoln pointed out that no nation could permanently exist half slave and half free. Go just one step further. How can humanity hope for permanent tranquillity and happiness when it is half self-determined and half-subjected ? And Asia...is the home of more than half the human race" (*ibid.* : 69-70).

America seemed to Sarkar to have responded to the

demands of Asia. He cited the instances of favourable response of America to India's struggle for freedom. An American Commission was, for example, founded at Washington to support the *Swaraj* movements in India. American papers gave publicity to the news of Civil disobedience and non-violent non-cooperation movement launched by Mahatma Gandhi and wrote editorials on the same. Sarkar quoted at length the twelve charges levelled by the first national convention of the American "Friends of Freedom for India" on 5 December 1920 at New York against the British Rule in India. They exposed the ugly features of the British Raj in India—how it systematically ruined India's agriculture, industry and commerce, her social texture and her cultural heritage. The American Socialist Party, the Farmer-Labour Party, the "Industrial Workers of the World" bolstered India's struggle for freedom in eloquent terms. American labour organizations of all denominations passed resolutions against the projected expulsion (under the pressure of Great Britain) of Indian political refugees and for their right to asylum in the U. S. as well as for India's freedom. Dozens of labour organizations appointed their own "India committees" which arranged mass meetings on India and disseminated news about India among the labour journalists. In order to help the political refugees from India the All-Central Council of Trade Unions in Seattle was prepared to do "anything within their power". "And leaders of the Hindustan Gadar (Revolution) Party at San Francisco had reasons to believe that they could depend on the promise of American Unionists" (*ibid.* : 73). The champions of India's struggle against the British Rule were present among the members of the U. S. Congress also. These facts convincingly demonstrated, according to Sarkar, America's love for political freedom "The advocacy of freedom for India is the acid test for American liberalism and love of liberty" (*ibid.* : 73). And, the people of the United States of America could, in Sarkar's judgment, claim a measure of success in the test.

Sarkar criticised the "anti-Asian feelings, sentiments and

interests" which were found "at work among the conservatives, diehards, reactionaries of Eur-America" (1949 : 140). But he always cherished the hope that the "honest intellectuals and liberal-minded statesmen" among the Eur-Americans would "make special efforts to educate themselves as well as their white colleagues to get relieved of the traditional Eur-American antipathy to Asian independence," since an independent Asia would more freely and willingly interact with Eur-America in economic and cultural matters for mutual benefits. Sarkar continuously endeavoured to help the intellectuals in the west particularly in the U. S. A. in the matter. While engaged in the task in the U. S. A., he breathed his last in the country, far away from India which he loved so dearly.

The duality in Sarkar's attitude to the United States, manifest in the above account, was thus the product of his intense concern with the national interests of the people of India. Sarkar found that the *realpolitik* characterising his milieu was such as the "communists will join the bourgeois states, and democrats will add to the strength of the fascists," if the national interests of the concerned parties demanded it (*ibid.* : 137). Sarkar was a witness to what happened in the two World Wars. Hence he came to believe that "The utilization of *vishwa-shakti* (world forces) in the interest of one's own self-assertion and progress is to remain the principal urge for each and every state, region, race, group or party throughout the world in the choice of allies and enemies. This is the *Realpolitik* of Dominion India's orientations to" world politics (*idem*).

XIX

Sarkar offered his ideas regarding the utilization of *viswa-sakti* as early as 1911 (in his Bengali lecture, "Itihas Bignan O Manavjatir Asa," at the Literary Conference held at Mymensingh, available as a chapter in Sarkar's *Aitihasik Prabandha* (Calcutta 1912) and also in English as *The Science*

of History and the Hope of Mankind (London 1912) by him). Since then he had engaged in a life-long endeavour to promote a reasonable understanding of western theories and institutions among his countrymen. Also, he sought to kindle the interests of the Bengalis and other Indians regarding the economic and political systems and cultures of different countries in Asia. Besides writing extensively about the customs and manners and political and economic institutions in diverse lands, he organised a number of research institutes and literary associations for the purpose. Indeed, if Sarkar had been known as the foremost organiser of national schools in the period preceding his first world-tour in 1914, he earned the fame of a remarkable organiser of a score of research institutes and scholarly associations after he had returned to India from his journey abroad.

The first notable manifestation of Sarkar's untiring efforts in the field was the appearance of the *Arthik Unnati* (Economic Progress), a monthly review, in April 1926. The journal became at once the nucleus of the Bangiya Dhana-Vijnan Parishat (Bengali Institute of Economics), formally announced in October 1928. It was, however, only at the end of 1931, i. e., when he returned to India from his second tour of the foreign lands, that the foundations of the "International Bengal" Institute and the Bengali Society of German Culture were laid. In November 1931 Sarkar issued two appeals through the press to his countrymen to commemorate the birth bicentenary of George Washington on 22 February 1932 and the death centenary of Goethe on 22 March 1932. The two celebrations organised by Sarkar as the Secretary along with persons like Dr. Rafidin Ahmed as his lieutenants, led to the origin of the Antarjatik Banga Parishat (International Bengal Institute) and the Bangiya Jarman Vidya Samsad (Bengali Society of German Culture). Quite a few other Samitis, Tols, Maktabs, Parishats had been established by Professor Sarkar.

Dr. Rafidin Ahmed mentions certain common features of these institutes ("The Research Institutes of Benoy Sarkar"

in Dass (ed.) 1940 : 371-405). They had a common aim of promoting research and expansion of knowledge through discussions and publications and creation of writers in different branches of inquiry.

Another prominent aim was the enrichment of Bengali language with contributions on economics, sociology, international relations, world-culture, etc., in Bengali. Hence the use of Bengali was encouraged as the medium of expression, though English was not "boycotted." The practice was in tune with Sarkar's life-long mission of cultivating the vernaculars of the Indians as the media of instruction and research in various fields of knowledge in order to break the shackles of the colonial culture which was perpetrated by the foreign rulers through the imposition of a foreign language on the natives of India (see Sarkar, 1922 : 83-84 & 298).

None of the Institutes followed any particular bias for or against any specific theories or institutions, ideologies or regions. Each of these institutes was "entirely non-political, non-party and non-sectarian."

It should perhaps be added that the Research Fellows, Secretaries and Directors were all honorary workers. Though there was no fixed tenure for the research scholars, many of them maintained their contacts with the Institutes during the entire period of their existence.

As a rule, Sarkar did not read papers or deliver lectures at these Institutes except with the object of introducing original French, German or Italian documents. His function was generally that of the *Chairman and the guide* in regard to references, comparisons, etc.

Discussions and lectures were held at the residence of Sarkar (for small groups), at the premises of the Indo-Swiss Trading Co. (for the Members), the Buddhist Hall at College Square and Dr. N. N. Law's residence (for the general public). Dr. N. N. Law was associated with most of these Institutes either as a President or an important office-bearer.

Except the *Arthik Unnati*, there was at that time hardly

any academic journal to publish the papers discussed in the sessions of these Institutes. "Under these circumstances the responsibilities of the Indian dailies are, therefore, great. And it deserves to be mentioned...that the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, the *Ananda Bazar Patrika*, *Liberty*, *Advance*, *Forward*, and the *Hindusthan Standard* of Calcutta understand their responsibilities and devote their columns to lengthy reports and summaries of the academic discussions held at these Research Institutes" (Ahmed, op. cit. : '73).

As Haridas Mukherjee, a close associate of Sarkar, informs us, "Prof. Sarkar guided no less than one hundred scholars in research...in a wide variety of subjects with an astonishing ability," who were associated with these research institutes. Though he very sincerely desired that his pupils and associates should write articles, pamphlets and books in history, politics, economics, philosophy or sociology in their vernacular, he insisted that one European language other than English be learnt by the research-workers. He taught them two basic lessons—first, to study everything in world-perspective and, secondly, to study life and universe in a thoroughly objective manner. He had a "pluralist" view of life and employed and encouraged the use of the pluralist technique in handling and interpreting the data, though "he was never in the habit of inflicting himself on the others" in this matter (*idem*). While research in various fields of knowledge in world-perspective was an important object of these institutes, another purpose was to communicate to the lay people the findings of research and to promote among them an understanding of the cultures and manners, economics and politics of different countries of the world.

Between 1928 and 1949 Sarkar founded the following institutes : (1) Bangiya Dhana-Vijnan Parishat (Bengali Institute of Economics, 1928), (2) Antarjatik Banga Parishat (International Bengal Institute, 1931); (3) Bangiya Jarman Vidya Samsad (Bengali Society of German Culture, 1931), (4) "Kalikatay Maldaha" Samiti ("Malda in Calcutta" Society, 1933), (5) Maldaha Jatiya Siksha Samiti (District

Council of National Education, Malda, reorganised; 1934), (6) Bangiya Samaj Vignan Parishat (Bengali Institute of Sociology, 1937), (7) Bangiya Asia Parishat (Bengali Asia Academy, 1938), (8) Bangiya Dante Sabha (Bengali Dante Society, 1938), (9) Bangiya Markin Sanskriti Parishat (Bengali Institute of American Culture, 1946). It is interesting that two of these institutes were devoted to the discussion of topics relating to the general welfare of the people of Malda, the district where Sarkar was born and brought up and where he organised a number of national schools. Sarkar's selflessness and patriotism found its first expression in his love for the district of his birth and boyhood. It did not, however, degenerate into any narrow localism. It gradually broadened into an internationalist humanism but was not lost in a rootless cosmopolitanism. Sarkar's internationalism "cannot possibly be arrayed against 'nationalism', whatever this latter may mean" (1938 : 10). He encouraged and hailed "the conscious and steady cultivation of foreign relations by Indians individually as well as collectively" (ibid. : 11) as an effective step to solve the manifold problems of India "*at a time when the Indian publicists and political parties were as a rule hostile to activities on the international plane*" (Sarkar, 1949 : 129-130 ; emphasis added).

The Asians' contacts with the western nations promoted, according to Sarkar, the mutually beneficial understanding of the East by the West and of the West by the East. Moreover, "*Camaraderies and intimacies between Young India and Young Asia...were fostered somewhat effectively in the educational and political centres of Eur-America...*" (ibid. : 126). Shyamaji Krishnavarma (Rajputana), Mme Cama (Bombay), Sardarsinghji Rana (Kathiawar), Biren Chaitopadhyay (Bengal and Hyderabad), Vinayak Savarkar (Bombay), Obedulla (U. P.) and a host of other political workers, scholars and men of affairs were admiringly referred by Sarkar to have contributed to it. Tagore's visits to Japan, China and Iran were considered by him very helpful in improving the relations between the Indians and these

countries. In addition to his ceaseless efforts towards the promotion of understanding between the East and the West, Sarkar strived very hard for the advancement of familiarity and understanding between one Asian country and another. He associated, for example, himself with the Iran Society founded by Dr. B. C. Law (President) and Dr. Md. Ishaque (Secretary) in Calcutta for the advancement of knowledge of the Indians regarding Iran and West Asia, besides what he did as the founder of the Bengali Asia Academy. He deplored that “There is no Institute, Association, Academy or Society in India relating to the countries now known as South East Asia...” (*ibid.* : 132) and made efforts towards correcting the deficiency.

Through the Institutes organised by him Sarkar sought to enrich the Bengali literature in serious historical, philosophical, economic, political and sociological thinking. His works prior to 1925 including his Bengali translations of important works in Bengali language have already been mentioned. Among his original publications between 1925 and 1949, *Naya Banglar Goda Pattan* (2 Vols., 1932) and *Badtir Pathe Bangali* may be emphasised because of their tremendous impact on the Bengali mind at that time. In the capacity of the Director of Researches in his institutes, he wrote in and edited two important volumes in Bengali that dealt with economic theory and practice as well as sociological methods and data. They were *Banglay Dhana Bijnan* (2 Vols., 1937-1939) and *Samaj Bijnan* (1938). They bore the testimony to how Sarkar inspired his associates and pupils to write on economic and socio-cultural matters as well as political themes in Bengali.

Sarkar’s ‘pluralism’ drew people of diverse opinions to him. They assembled in the many institutes organised by him. While this ‘pluralism’ was a sign of Sarkar’s catholicity in outlook and tolerance of others’ views and sustained the institutes, it proved to be the very source of their weakness. So long as Sarkar was alive, his enchanting and towering personality and broad vision held people of different and sometimes opposing views together. But after his departure

many of them fell apart. What was a way of searching the truth (or truths) for Sarkar proved to be a very loosely cementing bond for the lesser mortals. The 'pluralistic' intellectual firmament encompassing the institutes organised by Sarkar dissipated soon after his withdrawal from the scene. Sarkar, tended, it appears, to ignore the fact that the plural ways and opinions followed by the members under the canopy of an organisation might generate conflicts that would one day destroy the organisation itself. And, this was the very fate of the institutes founded by Sarkar.

XX

The tenure of Sarkar's service in the University of Calcutta came to an end on the completion of the sixtieth year of his life. He was, of course, granted one year's extension (according to the conventions in the University) and was offered also the charge of the Head of the Department of Economics. In 1948 he received an invitation from the United States for a series of lectures to be delivered there. Sarkar accepted the invitation and informed the authorities of the University of Calcutta of this acceptance. He informed them of his intention of leaving India for the States in the first part of 1949. Sarkar's friends and pupils were aggrieved to note that instead of ensuring Sarkar's return to the University from his lecture-tour abroad, the University authorities relieved Sarkar of the charge of the Head of the Department in an unceremonious, rather, an indecent manner. Sarkar was terribly hurt at this (see Pal, op. cit. : 170-171).

Any way, Sarkar started for the U. S. A. on 28 February 1949 and he was accompanied by Mrs. Ida Sarkar. His lecture-tour was arranged by the Institute of International Education in collaboration with the Watmull Foundation, Los Angeles. Since his arrival in the United States Sarkar had had a very busy schedule. His lecture-tour commenced with his talk at the University of Harvard on Monday, 7 March 1949. It dealt with the prospects of Indian agriculture and

industry in the background of the developments in world economy and Indo-American commerce. The lecture-tour then continued at a "hurricane speed." As a Visiting Professor Sarkar addressed audiences in the Universities of Harvard, Columbia, Cornell, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Cleveland, etc., as well as in many other centres of learning, institutes, professional bodies. The two pamphlets, *India in America*, edited by Tarak Nath Das, and *The Peoples and Cultures of Asia*, edited by Grace Wood (1949), Chapter I in Mukherjee's work (1953) and Chapters IX and X in Pal's work (1971 : 172-196) provide a glimpse of the startling work done by Sarkar within a span of six months only. The following comment by Miss Wood in the preface to her work mentioned above is worth perusing :

"As a member of Prof. Sarkar's class and as a participant of the colloquia held by him, I believe that Prof. Sarkar has succeeded admirably in attaining his goal, that of presenting his subject-matter, India, in a most realistic manner and from every possible point of view. Those of us who had occasion to be associated with him were constantly struck by the range of his factual knowledge and by the diverse methods at his command for handling and interpreting the data. It has been a great pleasure, having him on our campus, and I feel that his being here will bring great rewards to both our countries in terms of greater understanding and friendship".

The topics that Sarkar discussed ranged from the folklore and manners of preliterate peoples to the latest developments in world-culture, world-economy and world-politics. The fundamental theme was, of course, *The Dominion India in World Perspectives*, which formed also the topic and title of his last publication during his life-time (see Sarkar's letter dated 25 October 1949 from Washington D. C. to Pal in Pal, op. cit. : 193). The buoyant and spirited, active and determined Professor untiringly professed his views regarding India's resurgence in the comity of nations in the modern world and the mutual dependence of the East and the West and the need, therefore, of a closer understanding between the two parts of

the globe. From 7 March to 7 April Sarkar delivered many as fifty lectures (Pal, op. cit. : 174) and from 7 March to 10 August he gave one hundred fifty lectures in academic parlours, business associations and political centres (Mukherjee, 1953 : 22).

Indeed, Sarkar's days during this tour were marked by feverish activity. Everyday he had to meet several dozens of American experts, attend luncheons, deliver lectures in University classes, visit technical institutes or cultural centres, occasionally speak over the Radio, meet the journalists and interviewers, and then write articles for the press. Simultaneously, he wrote scores of letters to his friends and acquaintances in India and other countries. In spite of his busy schedule, he did not, for example, forget to write to Pramathanath Pal asking the latter to continue the collection of data regarding a 'wolf-child' in Midnapore, enquiry about which had started on the initiative of Sarkar who had been requested by the Department of Sociology of Columbia University before he left for the U. S. A., since Professor Ogburn of Chicago University wanted further information of the same (Sarkar's letter of 8 June 1949 from Ann Arbor, Michigan, to Pal—see Pal, op. cit. : 173).

In his letter of 25 October 1949 from Washington D. C. to Pal, Sarkar informed Pal that he would soon proceed to California and that he got a teaching assignment in Kansas City University, which was scheduled to commence in March, 1950 (*ibid.* : 193). He did not then know that his physical frame grew weak from within. Overwork seriously told upon his health, though there was no visible sign of it even on the day of his final breakdown, i. e., 27 October 1949.

About that fateful event Miss Florence Martyn wrote : "The day he became ill he had a session in the American University in the morning and a luncheon meeting at the Howard University. Coming out of the hall after his meeting he complained of not feeling well and a pain in his chest. He then collapsed." (Florence Martyn's letter on 'The Funeral

of Prof. Benoy Sarkar', in the *Hindusthan Standard*, 5 December 1949).

Sarkar was immediately taken to the Freedmen's Hospital, a hospital for the black, according to his desire (Pal, op. cit.: 194). Mrs. Ida Sarkar then staying in Philadelphia, was immediately brought to Washington D. C. Prof. Sarkar had gradually been convalescing by the treatment in hospital. But his condition suddenly deteriorated on 24 November of 1949 and he breathed his last at 4. 35 A. M. putting an end to all the efforts of the doctors, medical workers and authorities of the Freedmen's Hospital. His body was cremated in accordance with the funeral rites of the Hindus at the Lidge Crematorium on 26 November 1949. The Sannyasins of the Ramakrishna Mission in the city conducted the last rites.

Even in his last days this patriot-scholar thought of his *Matribhumi*. Mrs. Ida Sarkar wrote in a letter to an Indian friend that while Professor Sarkar was passing through sleepless nights in pain and agony, and restlessness, she enquired if he was thinking about her and their daughter Indira (then staying in Paris). Sarkar's reply was, "No, I think of my motherland and the work I still have to do." Sarkar fell sick in the midst of his ceaseless work for his country and for international cooperation and even on his death bed he felt restless for his unfinished tasks. His sudden demise was, no doubt, a great loss to his countrymen and to the votaries of international peace and understanding. But, probably, this was the kind of death which Sarkar longingly envisioned for himself in one of the poems, viz., 'Death', in his book, *Bliss of a Moment* :

"Not like a dead animal would I die
Not like one whose heart hides no cosmic heat ;
My last testament I would write at death
Myself, to declare the glories of the earth :
It is energy that is life, its forms
Craving, lordship, love, warfare, defeat ;
This ambrosia is not to be had
Except on this earth of mud, trees and stones.

If God there be, and if it be His might
To satisfy man's prayers and demands,
And if death is bound to come, I would pray
For a death full of madness, unrest, life".

Sarkar's untimely death was deeply mourned by his countrymen and by the intellectuals and scholars in India and abroad. The news of his death was published in all important dailies of West Bengal on 25 November. They published long obituaries and articles about his life's work. The newspapers in the U. S. A. also showed adequate deference to the departed professor. The *Washington Post* spoke of Sarkar as "India's leading researcher in sociology and economics." Prof. Harow Shapley, Nobel Laureate and Director of the Harvard Observatory, Harvard University, said that in Professer Sarkar's death "India has lost an important force." Professor F. H. Hankins, President, American Sociological Society, observed on Sarkar's death, "Prof. Sarkar will be missed all over the world. He was not only a colourful figure, and he was this both in his personal presence and in his writings, but he stimulated currents of thought in areas far removed from his native India. I am very glad to have known him personally. I have often recalled his visit with me at Clark University in 1919-20, where I had invited him at the suggestion of Prof. Seligman, one of my teachers at Columbia. His eyes flashed fire as he lectured in those days." Richard L. Park of Harvard University wrote in his letter of 1 December 1949 from Cambridge, Mass., to Pal, "All of us who knew Benoy Sarkar are better men and women for the experience. His attainments as a scholar are well-known ; those who knew him know also of his great human qualities of firm friendship and dynamic spirit. His death is a great loss to the world and to his intimate associates and friends" (quoted in Pal, op. cit. : 195).

In appreciation of Sarkar's work, Benoy Kumar Sarkar Memorial Lectures had been instituted in the American University, Washington, D. C. since 1950 on the initiative of Dr. Tarak Nath Das. It was arranged that Benoy Kumar Sarkar

Memorial Lectures would be delivered annually under the direction of the authorities of the American University. The main lecture for the year 1950 was delivered by Dr. Pitman Benjamin Potter, Professor of International Law at that University. Dr. Das observed in his Opening Remarks in connection with the inauguration of the Memorial Lectures on 3 May 1950 :

“Professor Sarkar was undoubtedly one of the foremost thinkers of Asia, of our time, and *one of the pioneers of the movement for Asian Independence* and at the same time *an advocate of intimate co-operation between the East and the West*” (*Calcutta Review*, July 1950 ; emphases added).

In this dual role referred to by Das, Sarkar embodied in his life the milieu of his times, with its aspirations and frustrations, tensions and contradictions.

CHAPTER III

POSITIVISM AND METHODS OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

The first term in the sociological discourses of Benoy Kumar Sarkar is 'positivism' which he found manifest in the Hindu way of life. Sarkar became widely known for *The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology* (1914 a, 1921, 1926 & 1937 a). The name of Auguste Comte and Comte's idea of positivism were no strange elements in the intellectual environs of Sarkar (cf s. VI, ch. II *sup.*). In her description of the various phases of Bengali social thought of modern times, Indira Sarkar notes 1860 to be the year of advent of positivism in the intellectual life of Bengal : "1860-90 Auguste Comte's positivism, religion of humanity and social service become a great socio-cultural force among Bengali intellectuals. John Stuart Mill's work about Comte (*Comte and Positivism*, 1865) furnishes introduction to this positive philosophy" (1949 : 10). Benoy Kumar used, however, the term in a special sense which becomes clear from the following paragraphs by him in the introduction to the first edition of PBHS :

"The *Introduction to Sukraniti* has been called 'The positive Background of Hindu Sociology', because *Sukraniti* as a *Nitisashtra*, *Arthashastra*, *Dharmashastra* or *Dharma-sutra* deals mainly with the topics implied by such Hindu categories as *Dharma* (morals), *Artha* (interests), and *Kama* (desires and passions) as opposed to *Moksa* or Salvation ; and hence a study in the non-*moksa* or non-transcendental and non-spiritual, i. e., the secular, worldly and 'positive' elements of Hindu social economy.

The transcendental and other-worldly aspects of Hindu life and thought have been made too much of. It has been supposed, proved and believed during the last century that Hindu civilisation is essentially non-industrial, and non-political, if not pre-industrial and pre-political, and that its sole feature

is ultra-asceticism and over-religiosity which delight in condemning the 'World, the Flesh and the Devil' !

Nothing can be farther from the truth. The Hindu has no doubt always placed the transcendental in the foreground of his life's scheme, but the Positive Background he has never forgotten or ignored. Rather it is in and through the positive, the secular and the material that the transcendental, the spiritual and the metaphysical have been allowed to display themselves in Indian culture-history...

The Hindu has never been a 'scorner of the ground' but always 'true to the kindred points of heaven and home,' has been solicitous to enjoy the good things of this earthly earth and beautify this 'orb of green.' The literature, fine arts, religious consciousness, industrial life, political organisation..., etc., of the Hindus—all have sought to realise this synthesis and harmony between the eternal antitheses and polarities of the universe : the worldly and the other-worldly, the positive and the transcendental..."(1914 : x-xi ; repeated in 1937a 5-6).

While the above lines bring out the nature of Hindu positivism, Sarkar's *Chinese Religion through Hindu Eyes* describes the character of 'Asiatic Positivism' (1916 : 72-79). Sarkar observed, "If the term ['positivism'] be applied to any inculcation of *humanitarian principles* or *social duties* and the like, every religion is surely *positivistic* and every human being is a *positivist*" (*ibid.* : 73 ; parenthesis and emphases added). In this respect there is hardly any distinction among Confucianism, Buddhism and Hinduism. And Sarkar immediately added, "I need only point out that the religion or morality of good citizenship, social service and humanitarianism has been in India along with, in spite of, and even in and through, every so-called *ism*. One word *Nirvana* does not explain three thousand years of Hindu culture" (*ibid.* :78-79).

In the final edition of PBHS, Sarkar farther elaborated the meaning which he read in Positivism. "It is clear," he observed, "that the word 'positive' is being used in the sense popularized by Comte's *Cours de Philosophie Positive*"

(1937 a : 10). In Comte's theory of three stages of evolution of human intellect and social organisation the third stage "is the 'positive stage' and is the 'age' of speciality and of generality... and the *etat positif* is marked by the reign of 'experience'. In Comte's judgment humanity has been marching towards a stage in which positive knowledge or scientific experience is dominant" (*ibid.* : 10-11).

"But it should," Sarkar continued, "he observed at once that the only *liaison* of the *Positive Background of Hindu Sociology* with Comte's *Philosophie Positive* lies in the value he attaches to the category 'positive.' It is simply the association of scholarly brains, exact knowledge, experience or experiment, generalization, specialisation, science as antithesis of religion etc., with positivism that is utilized in the present study. Comte's analysis of 'mental stages' in evolution or 'ages' of the human mind, however, is not accepted here" (*ibid.* : 11).

Sarkar discovered a certain kind of positivism-in the Vedas. Elaborating the nature of Vedic Positivism he observed, "The ideals of the Rishis of the Vedic culture-complex are not very metaphysical or other-worldly, the atmosphere of sacrifices, hymns, prayers and gods notwithstanding. The literature is preoccupied with the annihilation of the enemy, the seizure of enemy properties, the distribution of the booty, the expansion of one's territory, and the attainment of the highest position in the society of men. It describes jealousies, ambitions, hatreds, wars, elections, harangues, and rivalries for accession to the throne" (*ibid.* 125). Sarkar mentioned some verses from the *Rig Veda* and the *Atharva Veda*, which deal with the matters of mundane life and then remarked, "...such verses ...should compel indologists to banish from their mentality the ultra-Hegelian and romantic conception of Vedic literature as being nothing but religious, metaphysical or mystical. It is only necessary to be adequately oriented to Vedic positivism at the threshold of investigations into the literature and life of the thousand years previous to the rise of powerful kingdoms in the age of Bimbisara, Mahavira, and

Sākyā the Buddha" (*ibid.* : 127). Elements of positivism were noted also in Sakyan thought and in Jaina literature as well.

Sarkar could not, probably ignore the strong association of the ideas of *Nirvana* or *Ahimsa* with the name of Sākyā the Buddha. Hence, in order to highlight what he considered the positive elements in Indian (Hindu culture) he wrote, "If our Mother India is great and divine because she gave birth to a Śākyā the Buddha (Awakened), let us all worship our Mother India as equally great and divine because she produced a Viṣṇugupta-Chāṇakya, the Kautilya or the Kautilya (Cunning or Crooked). It is in this worship that we do justice to the glorious 'positive background' of Hindu sociology as furnishing the folk-elements, the materialistic complex, the worldly group-consciousness and the rationalistic perspectives of India's transcendental and spiritual achievements. Kautilya completes Buddha" (*ibid.* : 361).

Though Sarkar used the terms, 'positive' and 'positivism', mainly in the restricted sense spelt out above in his relentless fight against the view that the Hindus were other-worldly, there is, refreshingly enough, evidence of Sarkar's awareness of the manifold implications of 'positivism' and of the influence of positivism as a mode of analysing social events on him.

II

Sarkar tried to grapple with the antinomies of natural science and history and allied disciplines dealing with the events of human life, of the fact of cultural specificities of the actual societies in history and the need for understanding the nature of human society in general and of the laws of social evolution, of the external objects and the subject studying them. Even if he could not come out with satisfactory solutions to the problems posed in the above antinomies, he would very legitimately deserve the honour of a pioneer who seriously bothered himself with the methodological issues in history and sociology in India. And a certain idea of positivism

lurked behind Sarkar's discussion of the methods to be followed in natural as well as 'mental and moral sciences'. Of course, one would not expect the same level of sophistication in Sarkar's understanding of positivism as is observable in the discourses of the same by the sociologists and philosophers of today and, then, one should also keep in mind all the varied uses of the term.

"Positivism always involves," points out Alastair MacIntyre, "taking natural science (rather than, for example, history) as the paradigm of human knowledge, and it always involves taking a particular view of the nature of science. But even on this latter topic so-called positivists have held such different views that the term is scarcely ever illuminating without further explanation" (in Mitchell (ed), 1979 : 145). The last mentioned difficulty does not, however, hinder one from following the core meaning of positivism.

Positivism implies, according to Kolakowski, "a phenomenalist, nominalist conception of science" (1972 : 16). Its feature of phenomenism suggests that the distinction between essence and phenomenon should be eliminated from science, since it is misleading. Positivists object to any accounting for a phenomenon "in terms of occult entities that are by definition inaccessible to human knowledge" (ibid. : 12). *Nominalism* rules out any assumption that any insight formulated in general terms can have any real referents other than individual concrete objects. True it is that science requires, for the ordering of human experiences, the use of conceptual instruments that describe certain ideal states, e.g., the concept of a vacuum in mechanical theory, figures in geometry, which are never realised in the empirical world. What should however, be kept in mind is that these abstractions are "no more or less than means, human creations that serve to organise experience but that are not entitled to lay claim to any separate existence" (ibid. : 15). The above characteristic also suggests "*the rule that refuses to call value judgments and normative statements knowledge*" (ibid. : 16). Finally, in positivist philosophy there is a belief in the

essential unity of the scientific method. Positivists hold to the belief "that the methods of acquiring valid knowledge and the main stages in elaborating experience through theoretical reflection, are essentially the same in all spheres of experience" (*ibid.* : 17).

The preceding analysis of positivism contains the notion that of science has the ability to predict results (Fay, 1977 : 21 and Kolakowsky, *op. cit.* : 15), and this is the basis of the power of controlling events which scientific power gives to man. From it follows that "a positivist conception of the knowledge of social life contains within itself an instrumentalist-engineering conception of the relation of this knowledge to social action" (*Fay, op. cit.* : 43).

Talcott Parsons calls positivistic any social theory which "involves explicitly or implicitly (more often the latter) the view that positivist science constitutes man's sole possible significant cognitive relation to external (non-ego) reality, man as actor, that is" (1968 :61). By this he indicates any system in which it is assumed that human action can be adequately characterised without regard to the agent's own standpoint.

Some of the elements of positivism depicted above are clearly discernible in the writings of Sarkar. Take, for example, the following observation of Sarkar : "Human civilization, like physical facts and phenomena, require to be studied in such a way as to lead to the detection of uniformities in the sequences and co-existences of social movements. History has to be put on the same level with physics and the Natural Sciences, so that predictions may be possible in the social world as in the physical" (1912 c : pref.). Then, two aspects of sciences were mentioned by Sarkar—"positive or theoretical, and practical or applied" (1913 : 63). "As a positive study, science confines itself to the investigation of the facts and phenomena, as they are and have been, how they happen, their interconnections and interdependences" (*idem*). The theoretical investigator is interested in discovering the truths about the phenomena and, therefore, in the preceding questions regarding them. He hardly expresses

any concern with “the ethical or utilitarian considerations” (*ibid.* : 64). But as an applied or practical study, science has “certain definite aims to further and has to devise ways and means for their fulfilment. The investigator is not merely satisfied with the knowledge of the processes and the abstract truths regarding the phenomena ; his chief concern is the uses to which the truths may be applied and the work that may be done with them” (*idem*). Thus one part of science “merely discovers principles and laws and establishes truths, the other applies those rules to practical purposes and actually ministers to social well being...The latter of these functions stands upon the former, inasmuch as it is the positive knowledge of the truth about a matter that furnishes a basis for the practical man, and inadequate information is of very little help in guiding the actual course of an action. And so the applied sciences are based on the positive” (*ibid.* : 64-65). Sarkar sought to demonstrate the truth of these statements with the examples of economics, political science and the science of education. Thus, Sarkar wanted to ‘elevate’ history and other subjects dealing with human and social phenomena to the level of natural sciences. Alongside this aspiration, another strand emphasizing the peculiarities of history and the socio-cultural phenomena may be detected at least in the writings during the earlier part of Sarkar’s career.

III

During the first phase of his career Sarkar sought to highlight the unique features of the Indian, or, more precisely, Hindu, society and culture. An early evidence of this attempt is available in his lecture, “Vidyalaye Dhramasiksha” (Sarkar, 1912 b. : 97-124), or “The pedagogy of the Hindus.” It is a critique of the western pedagogic ideals and philosophy of life. It asserts that real spiritual culture capable of nourishing and developing the infinite possibilities in man is achievable only in the Family system of Education

as was nurtured in the Homes of preceptors of ancient India and not in the educational institutions of the type known in Europe and America. Its concluding message is : “আধুনিক যুগোপযোগী ভারতগঠনের অর্থ” ইউরোপের অনুকরণ নহে—ভারতের মুকীয় আত্মপ্রকাশ, নিজ বিশেষজ্ঞের আধিপত্য প্রতিষ্ঠা” (তদেব : ১২৩) : that is, “The way to building India in keeping with modernity or the spirit of the present age lies not in emulating Europe but in declaring her unique identity and in securing the glory of her own values” (ibid. : 123). It expresses the hope that the Indians would not lose their distinctiveness under the influences of the newly established industries, railways and steam engine, press and electricity and political ideals coming from the west. They will utilise them in their own way. They will develop industries, take pains for mastering the newly discovered facts and theories in science not in order to become slaves to the enjoyment of worldly desires but with a view to discovering ever new ways to disinterested religiousness. Their patriotism and love for their tradition and civilisation would not lead to conflict with and malice towards the others but enrich the stock of varieties in human society and realise the glory of God on earth (cf. ibid. : 122). In essays like “Itihaser Upades” (“The Lessons of History” 1912 : 1-16), “Aadhunik Bharat” (Modern India, : ibid. : 47-62), “Europe O Bharat” (Europe and India ; ibid. : 112-131), and “Amader Jatiya Charitra” (Our National Character ; 1912 b : 76-89), Sarkar, a nationalist of the Swadeshi days, tirelessly harped on the specificity of Indian (Hindu) culture and, therefore, on the need for indigenisation of the elements brought to it by the western civilisation, on the need for adapting them to its genius.

Sarkar’s deep concern with a proper understanding of the specificity of the Indian culture and society came to influence his thoughts about what Sarkar called “Methods of Human Science” in his small but important book, *Introduction to the Science of Education* (1913), citations from which have already been presented. Curiously enough, Mukhopadhyay’s discussion

(1958) of Sarkar's methods of studying history does not contain a single reference to the book, although Sarkar raised here many important problems as to how to study history, which are debated about even to-day.

Sarkar's enchantment with Science is, of course, manifest at the initial page of the work (1913). Diverse methods of study may have to be adopted to get a perfect mastery over a subject. "And the truths that are discovered with the help of these various methods of investigation have to be placed in a systematic order, their mutual relations and coordinations have to be explained and adjusted, their unity and harmony organized on a rational basis before they can constitute what is technically called a science" (*ibid.* : 1). Add to this Sarkar's strong advocacy of the inductive method of teaching which would, he expected, enable a student to proceed from the known to the unknown according to the different stages of his development and give him the pleasure of actively exercising his own powers of observation and experiment.

"The scientist trudges", observed Sarkar, "through the *terra incognita* of his field of discovery by slow steps, and at every point he has got to struggle with many an obscure untruth that sometimes bewilders and defeats him. He can arrive at some sort of working hypotheses only after the collection of many seeming and partial truths as the result of his diverse investigations into the unknown. These hypotheses and half-truths, the products of the several stages of conflict between light and darkness, human effort and the resistance of Nature, constitute a long and tedious series which may ultimately lead to the discovery of the final truths. The student has likewise to wade through the realm of knowledge with uncertain steps, encountering difficulties and overcoming them at every turn. He should follow the practice of the scientific discoverer....." (*ibid.* : 74-75).

The inquirer would investigate into a great variety of facts and phenomena. But the ultimate object would be "to systematize and methodize the results of these individual investigations and find out the unity in the

diversity and the general principle underlying the varied instances" (*ibid.* : 81-82). Following this inductive method of ascending from the "individual to the general, particular to the common, concrete to the abstract" (*ibid.* 82), the students as well as other inquirers "will advance from simple to complex truths, and from the concrete facts to subtle and abstract generalizations or principles" (*ibid.* : 84). Sarkar's praise for Science and the inductive method was thus complete. At the same time, he recognised the difficulties presented by the special nature of the subject matter of the human sciences.

"...Religious and Political subjects, Social and Legal topics, and phenomena of Art and Literature which are essentially human in their nature, having their origin in the manifold aspects of man and his life, and the arts and institutions of civilization which depend for their progression, retrogression and evolution upon the living and active faculties of the human mind, present peculiar difficulties to the investigator because of their inherent intricacies and complexities. These subtle, ever-changing and ever-growing processes of the psychical world *are evidently not to be attacked by the methods which a scientist adopts to investigate the simple and palpable facts relating to lifeless objects and organisms of lower orders*. In such cases varying methods have to be adopted to suit the complex facts relating to each class of human phenomena" (*ibid.* : 34-35 ; emphasis added).

Since the facts and phenomena of the human world are the creations of ever-ingenuous or 'progressive' human mind, "there is no fixity and stationariness in human affairs and institutions. Every moment a new is taking place of the old, and thus a 'history' is being made ; and on account of such incessant changes *history never repeats itself, but displays novel types and situations at every stage*" (*ibid.* : 36 ; emphasis added). To gain an adequate knowledge of the running stream of human history, one must, therefore, acquaint oneself with the varieties and peculiarities that have characterised human civilisation in its different epochs

and centres. This is the nature of the historical inquiry. And the "historical inquiry is...the apt method of investigating social phenomena and the proper foundation of the sciences about man" (*ibid.* : 38).

Logic, Ethics, Economics, Politics, Psychology and Sociology are, according to Sarkar, the human sciences other than history. "The subject-matter of these sciences is human mind and character—the ideals and institutions of man, and as such is very complex and intricate" (*ibid.* : 100). There is a further delineation of the scope and subject matter of sociology in the following : "the actual manners, customs, and usages of various peoples, their rites and ceremonies, and must receive the student's fullest consideration if he wants to discover the *spirit* that underlies them. To the students of Sociology the facts and phenomena of social life, the institutions and practices through which man displays his inner nature and spiritual characteristics have the greatest importance" (*ibid.* : 105).

Though a comparison of Sarkar and Max Weber on the basis of the above description of Sociology by Sarkar may appear to be gratuitous, it is evident that the aim of sociology appeared to Sarkar at least in the initial stages to understand the *spirit* or meaning beneath the manners and customs and other social phenomena and it called for an appropriate methodology. "On account of the complexities and ramifications inherent in the mental and moral phenomena, these sciences have an abstract subtlety and a metaphysical character peculiar to themselves" (*ibid.* : 100-101). Hence, the enunciation of generalisations and universal principles in the disciplines dealing with them is possible only "in subsequent stages after a careful analysis of the individual cases and comparison and contrast between them. Not the laws but the facts, not 'general' principles but 'particular' events of mental and moral life, the affairs of the economic and political world, are to be regarded as the proper subjects of study" (*ibid.* : 101-102).

Sarkar's insistence on understanding the uniqueness of

the various manifestations of human thoughts and actions is remarkable : "That certainly is a very incomplete and imperfect knowledge about man which gives us no conception of the varieties of human ideals institutions and languages, and diversities of political and social theories and organizations. Such knowledge as does not supply one with the types of human culture and differences in the standpoints and objectives of man under the different sets of circumstances is quite useless for practical purposes of advice and guidance in the actual world" (*ibid.* : 38-39).

Sarkar was, thus, acutely conscious of the need for understanding the nature of individualities and peculiarities of the historical events, of the socio-cultural phenomena, though he appeared, at times, to suffer from a certain kind of psychological reductionism. His emphasis on the 'individual' and 'individual psychology' as the basis of the specificities of socio-cultural phenomena is demonstrated in the observation that "a man is responsible for his own culture ; the individual peculiarities of a man are best known to himself ; others can have only a conjecture of them." A teacher who is interested in the natural development of any particular learner must keep in view "the peculiar characteristics of the person concerned" and must recognise "the independence and individuality of the latter" (*ibid.* : 58). If the individual teacher is required to plan his work in such a way as to promote the "freedom and separateness" of the individual, a system of education for a particular people will have to be "adapted to the character and requirements of the people for whom it is intended" so that it facilitates the 'Natural Development' of the people and becomes truly 'National.' Thus one step farther from the recognition of peculiarity of the individual leads to the conclusion that "*The genius of the nation, its historic individuality, the type of culture it has evolved, its ideals in actual life and traditions,* on the one hand, and, on the other the spirit of the age... discovered and realized by the other members of the human society at the time...must be taken into consideration by the educational organizers of every age and clime" (*ibid.* : 59-60).

Sarkar appeared to take in the following statement an epistemological position which might lead to interesting results : "The knowledge of man about the universe grows and expands round self-knowledge,—the knowledge about one's identity, continuity, and individuality as the centre and nucleus of all truths. It is the perception of self that is the foundation of all other perceptions, that makes observation of, and inferences about, non-self possible. It is by placing the external *objects* in contact with the *subject*, i. e., one's own self, by comparing and contrasting the self with the non-self and realizing the relations of one's own body and mind with the surrounding environment, both physical and human, that man acquires and develops his intelligence and thinking powers" (*ibid.* : 88-89). There is an apparent precedence of the *subject* over the *object* in this position. But the controversy, promised initially, is summarily put an end to and substituted by an overly positivistic concern with generalisation and universal laws of human and social behaviour.

True, the 'inductive method' suggested by Sarkar "would require in the case of the human sciences an *intimate acquaintance* with the various psychical processes and operations, thoughts and ideas, diverse ideals of character and motives of action, multifarious rites and ceremonies, the numberless customs and practices, and the varied institutions and organizations that constitute the several aspects of human and social life" (*ibid.* : 119). The object underlying the method is to impress upon the inquirer "the vastness, variety, and complexity of the intellectual, social, political and economic spheres of human activity" (*ibid.* : 119-120). But 'the ultimate aim is to discover the common nature of human affairs. "When a sufficient number of facts has been accumulated, and each subject minutely examined and analysed, materials will be ready for the formulation of theories and hypotheses regarding their common nature and characteristics and the laws of their working. When these hypotheses and guess-works about the causal relations and order of occurrences have been well tested and brought into

relation with one another, the path will be opened up for the discovery and formulation of the unity in the diversity, and the ‘scientific’ truth about the subject. Finally, there will have sprung up a body of truths systematized and organized—in other words, a science” (*ibid.* : 132-133).

With all their knowledge of the ‘perpetual flux’ in human ideals and institutions and varieties and the diversities of social and cultural phenomena, the students of human societies and culture will at the end of the long road of their studies and investigations come to recognise that “there are certain deep-seated characteristics which are common to all times and all ages, that are permanent and universal ingredients of human nature itself....These supply the fundamental unity and basal uniformity pervading the whole human society—underlying the thousand and one differences and types of physical and mental outfit” (*ibid.* : 42).

For a comprehensive understanding of the changefulness and specificities as well as stationary elements and commonness in human societies and of historical epochs, the students of human sciences are required to follow two methods of investigation, viz., “(1) The historical method, which deals with facts furnished by History, the record of changes and movements in civilization ; and (2) the Philosophical method, which exhibits the fixed and permanent characteristics of human life and civilization, unities and uniformities of ideals. Each method itself leads only to partial and one-sided truths ; so in the interest of the whole truth we have to use both the methods” (*ibid.* : 43-44). On a proper application of these methods they would see through the veneer of “the series of vicissitudes, that constitute the life and soul of civilization” the truth that “there are certain common characteristics of human nature which have made man essentially a gregarious and political animal...” (*ibid.* : 44-45). “Analyse the human mind and the very nature of man or his society at any one of its stages, and facts will at once be disclosed as to whether the association between man and man is indispensable or whether he can supply all his wants

independently of others' help. No historical inquiry is necessary for such an investigation" (*ibid.* : 45).

The mind of Sarkar hitherto oscillating between the enquiry into the nature of 'the varying needs of societies' (*ibid.* : 48), the 'genius of the nation' (*ibid.* : 59), "the substructure of national sentiment", 'Freedom, Race, Tradition' of specific collectivities in history, on the one hand and the search for eternal verities of human nature and society on the other is thus finally set at rest through a confirmation of the positive method which recognises, as Comte puts it, "the philosophical preponderance of the spirit of the whole over the spirit of detail" (Comte in *Positive Philosophy*, Vol. II ; cited in Thompson, 1976 : 114). Sarkar seems to have been heavily influenced by Comte's assertion that, "In our search for the laws of society, we shall find that exceptional events and minute details must be discarded as essentially insignificant, while science lays hold of the most general phenomena which everybody is familiar with, as constituting the basis of ordinary social life" (*ibid.* : 173) and that "every law of social succession disclosed by the historical method must be unquestionably connected...with the positive theory of human nature..." (*ibid.* : 114).

Sarkar gives, of course, many twists and turns to what he receives from the founding father of positivism. He thinks, for example, that a study of concrete and living facts of materials of national life will reveal "the similarity of life that exists between the ancients and the modern peoples and of those who are to come." This deviation from Comte's idea of stages of progress is obviously related to Sarkar's favourite thesis that the Indians with an ancient heritage are not fundamentally different from the people in the modern west and are capable of meeting the challenges of the latter.

This emphasis on the similarity between the Hindus and the western people led him to support positivism with a degree of overenthusiasm which proved to be devastating for the very kernel of positivism. The term 'positive' in positivism is intended to convey a warning against the attempts of theology

and metaphysics to go beyond the world given to observation in order to enquire into the first causes and ultimate ends. It is, of course, true that “the meaning the positivists themselves ascribe to their *anti-metaphysical warnings* has been interpreted… in various ways” (Kolakowski, op. cit. : 24; emphases added). Most of the positivists tend to follow “Wittgenstein’s more radical rule : they refuse it any recognition whatever. The second, more moderate version is also represented, however, (take the case of Carnap, for example), and according to it a metaphysics that makes no scientific claims is legitimate” (*ibid.* : 242). It is true that, for the positivists also, “the questions of the essential nature of science, and whether all our knowledge, properly so called, could ever in principle be reduced to science, untainted by theology or metaphysics, are still matters of debate” [Flew (ed.), 1984 : 284]. But, it is far from their comprehension that theology or metaphysics belongs, as Sarkar opines, to the domain of the positive. Sarkar writes, “...both in subject-matter and methodology all the mental sciences,—psychology, pedagogics, economics, politics, sociology, aesthetics, *religion, metaphysics and what not*—are positive, with very slight exceptions, if any” (1938 CR Jan. : 39 ; emphasis added).

One understands Sarkar when he says that God, soul or the other world are to an extent illusory, since they elude the five senses of man (Sarkar in Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 211) or if he does not consider Vedic knowledge to have contained anything “which can be rationally appraised as in any sense more worthwhile than the teachings of all the other branches of learning (of the Hindus) put together” (1921 : 92). But Sarkar’s enthusiasm over positivism is carried too far when he propounds, “There are very few aspects, if any at all, of the human disquisitions about God, the soul, the infinite, the hereafter, the other-world, which can be reasonably described as outside the range of the positive” (1938 CR Jan. : 39).

How does Sarkar arrive at such a novel conclusion ? The answer is : having recourse to reductionism. “We cannot,” writes Sarkar, “seriously fight shy of the question as to how

little of the mind, after all, is really non-sensate, non-material, non-positive. Perhaps the thoughts of man relating to the condition after death, the other world, the hereafter, God and so forth may to a certain extent be conceded as belonging to the realm of the non-objective, non-sensible, extra-mundane, non-positive. And yet, the brain and the nervous system are to be given their dues even in regard to the construction of the ultra-mundane spheres. And to that extent the operations of the human intellect bearing on after-death phenomena and the like have ultimately to be grasped as being fastened to the 'brass-tags' of positive knowledge. In the operations of human intellect, be it observed *en passant*, are included the 'intuitive' processes also" (*ibid.* : 38).

This kind of reasoning is responsible for the assertion that the "subject matter of every knowledge, every *vidya*, every *kala*, every science is something perceptible by the senses and is to that extent tangible. Or it is based *in the last analysis* on the sensate and tangible realities...Every knowledge is therefore positive in its very origin, nature and content" (*ibid.* : 37-38).

Thus there are several shifts in the interpretation of the term, 'positive', which is ultimately reduced to the physiological process. The question is : why does Sarkar take an extreme position like this ? Let Sarkar himself answer it. "The use of the category, positivism, in the sense of material, rational, worldly, human or secular ideology and achievements can be traced to Comte's *Cours de Philosophie Positive* (Paris, 1830). It is curious that this kind of positivism was denied to India by Orientalists of Eur-America and Asia including India for quite a long time...From Max Müller's *India What Can It Teach Us?* (London, 1883) to Max Weber's *Gesammelte Aufsätze Zur Religionssociologie* (Tübingen 1922) the learned societies of the world were sicklied o'er with this postulate about India being a land of unsecular, non-materialistic and other-worldly attainments" (*ibid.* : 39-40). Thus "Sarkar reacted to the Max Weberian interpretation of Hinduism" and "felt the need also to reinterpret the Indian tradition" (Singh in Malik (ed.) 1979 : 109). He made a frantic effort "to dispel the

notion of the ‘other-worldly’ outlook of the orientals and to examine the process of development of the ‘might of man’ especially in the Indian context” (Mukherjee, 1979 : 41). The question is : did Sarkar succeed in his mission, at least, logically ?

Was not this attempt at reducing ‘other-worldly’ ideas into positive knowledge a recognition of the overwhelming presence of other-worldly elements in Hindu culture ? One may have the impression that Sarkar had to reinterpret ‘positive’ to include theological and metaphysical categories, since he could not wish away the obsession of the Hindus with the world beyond the mundane existence.

IV

If Sarkar could not deny the marked presence of spiritualism in the Hindu scheme of life, he could not agree either with the western scholars emphasising this element to the exclusion of the other feature, i. e., materialism and worldliness, of the Hindus. He strove very hard to repudiate the idea of “the alleged inferiority of the Hindu genius in grappling with the problems of this mundane sphere and the extraproveness of the Indian mind to metaphysical and unpractical speculations” (1914a : x). Even in the ‘Pedagogy of the Hindus’, the English version of ‘Vidyalaye Dharmasiksha’ which was cited in the preceding section and which highlighted Sarkar’s initial emphasis on the specificity and altruism and spiritualism of Hindu culture, he did not forget to ask, “Was that system [i. e., the domestic system of education at the Preceptors’ homes] essentially monastic and ascetic, and did it kill all secular and social instincts of the learners ? Did the *Brahmacharis* come out from the preceptors’ homes merely as monks, missionaries, and *Sanyasis* ? Could they not satisfy the diverse material wants of man ? Did they not know how to provide for the necessities, comforts and decencies of life ?...Were not social and political sciences, plant life and dissection of animals, physical phenomena and chemical manipulations among the courses of instruction ?” [reproduced

in Sarkar, (1914a : xii) ; parenthesis and emphasis added]. He repeated these leading question to break the image of the Hindus as “a race of metaphysicians, airy philosophers, and transcendental speculators…[that] excite[d] the pity of the go-ahead pushing occident and pander[ed] to the foolish, unthinking vanity of a fallen people.” This image was, he alleged, more a deliberate and/or fanciful creation of the western scholars and indologists and their Indian emulators than a true reflection of the reality.

Through an application of what he called historico-comparative method Sarkar sought to demonstrate that “the Orientals have served mankind with the same idealism, the same energy, the same practical good sense, and the same strenuousness, as have the Greeks, Romans, and Eur-Americans, that the Oriental, have been as optimistic, active and aggressive in promoting social well-being and advancing spiritual interests as have the other races…the animality or materialism of the Asians has not been less in intensity or extensivity than that of the Europeans and Americans” (1922 : 176). His over concern with disproving the allegedly natural inferiority of the Indians and other Asians to the Eur-Americans in the material field led to his emphasis, rather, *overemphasis*, on the similarities between the East and the West, and made him, as will be seen below, forgetful of the warnings which he himself gave to the students attempting comparative analyses of societies and cultures across the time and space.

Sarkar was dismayed to note that “Scholars, both in the West and in the East, still take their cue from pioneer orientalists like Max Müller and Maine, and are used to interpreting the Indian ‘view of life’ in terms of other-worldliness and pessimism, and appraising India’s juristic, political and economic existence as a web of archaic institutions alleged to be essentially distinct from the Western” (1922a : 3). But the discovery of “Hindu Napoleans and Frederick the Greats” through the wealth of epigraphic data and other archaeological evidence, old books like the Artha-Sastra of Kautilya, ‘the Bismarck of the first Hindu Empire’, force upon all

concerned the conviction that “the behavioristic psychology of the races is essentially similar. Man as a political animal has responded to the stimuli of the objective universe in much the same way in the East and the West...and the prevalent notion about the Orient tends to find at last its proper place among the superficial body of unscientific *idolas*” (*ibid.* : 4).

Thus, Sarkar crossed his sword chiefly with Max Müller and not so much with Max Weber as the students of sociology generally believe. Rather, Sarkar directed “a frontal attack on the traditional prejudices regarding Asia such as are concentrated in Hegel, Cousin, Max Müller, Maine, Janet, Smith, Willoughby and Huntington” (1922a : viii). He noticed that a ‘unilateral and hasty’ view of Hindu civilization has become prevalent among scholars, thanks greatly to the romanticism of Schlegel, Humboldt and other German pioneers of indology ...Hegelian metaphysics is responsible for much of the nonsense propagated in regard to the ‘spirit’ of the Orient among the high-brows of the world. And among the lay public perhaps the greatest single source of mischief has been Max Mueller’s *India What can it Teach us?* and *Chips from a German workshop*, full, as both these publications are, of unbalanced and exaggerated notions in regard to the alleged other-worldliness and spirituality of the Hindus” (1926 [1921] : 201). Indeed, the authorship of many sweeping generalisations about the spirituality of the Indians was traced by Sarkar to “Hegel’s metaphysical analysis of the ‘principle’ of the Oriental world. ‘Since the external and the internal law and moral sense,’ writes Hegel in the *Philosophy of History* [P. 112 (*Sibree’s transl.* N. Y. 1900)] are not yet distinguished—still form an undivided unity—so also do religion and the state. The constitution generally is a theocracy, and the kingdom of God is to the same extent also a secular kingdom as the secular kingdom is also divine.’ And after detailed examination he says that “China, Persia, Turkey—in fact, Asia generally is the scene of despotism, and in a bad sense, of tyranny; but in these

countries tyranny rouses men to resentment. But in India it is normal : for here there is no sense of personal independence with which a state of despotism could be compared, and which would raise revolt in the soul, nothing approaching even a resentful protest against it is left' (*Ibid*, p. 161)'—(Sarkar, 1921 : 3). Sarkar was terribly irked by this kind of analysis since it had a very dangerous implication for the subjugated people of India and the rest of Asia. Indeed, Hegel averred immediately after the lines quoted by Sarkar that the Indian people were amenable only to the "corporeal smart and pain of being deprived of absolute necessities" (Hegel, 1945 : 161). And, this kind of "philosophical analysis" led the philosopher to assert that "It is the necessary fate of Asiatic empires to be subjected to Europeans" (*ibid.* : 142).

What was most disconcerting was that Hegel's ideas were repeated not merely by a single English author like Rudyard Kipling propagating the idea of "the white man's burden", more specifically, the British people's burden of civilising Asia but in the writings of scores of other Eur-American authors and scholars. Willoughby denied the possibility of realization of the idea of liberty, Janet, that of State, by the Hindus of bygone ages. Following Cousin "Janet finds the Hindus to be the most mystical of all Asian peoples, and, in fact, the fountain source of mysticism among the nations of the earth" (Sarkar, op. cit. : 3-4). Sociologists like Emile Senart, Max Weber, Celestein Bougle too betrayed a similar understanding of the Indian culture. Senart's two remarks on India cited by Sarkar in PBHS (1937a) are a pointer to the kind of appreciation held by these scholars. Senart observed in his *Les Castes dans l'Inde* (1927 edition : 228) : "The Hindu spirit is very religious and very speculative. Obstinate guardian of traditions, it is singularly insensible to the joys of action and to the demands of material progress" (quoted in Sarkar, 1937a : 18). Further, "Indian spirit has been characterised by Emile Senart as follows : 'A general consideration strikes me. In the field of speculation his natural

mysticism sways the Hindu spirit, the concatenation of formulae sustains it and the intoxication of abstraction stimulates it....". But in every other domain it is little creative (Sarkar, 1937a : 71). Max Weber also offered the "conventional message", depicting the Hindus and Buddhists "as being alike in the aversions to material pursuits and in the predilections for meditation and other-worldly salvation" (*ibid.* : 18). Bougle doubted in a similar vein the existence of a properly political organisation in the Hindu society.

The above views were cited by Sarkar as a few representative reports "about the oriental 'type' of civilization now stereotyped in philosophic consciousness throughout the world" (1921 : 4). The logic of "these 'type'-philosophers" appeared to him comparable to that of mediaeval schoolmen. "They start with the postulate of the Occident's difference from and superiority to the Orient. And then they proceed deductively to speculate on the 'spirit' of Asia and find in Asian institutions exactly what they seek and want to prove" (*idem*).

In Sarkar's eyes it was Max Müller who was the most influential of these 'type'-philosophers and hence his criticism became at places vitriolic in nature. Sarkar recognised, of course, the contribution of Max Müller to the resuscitation of the interest of the scholars in India of the yore. The industrial revolution resulted, according to Sarkar, in a phenomenal expansion of human mind, a catholicity of interests and toleration of divergent views. "In this emancipation of the intellect from the thraldom of parochial and racial outlook, Old India's contribution has probably been the most helpful and significant....The 'discovery of Sanskrit' by the European scholars of the eighteenth century opened the portals to the series of the sciences called 'comparative.' And it is this that has rendered possible the recognition...of the fundamental uniformity in the reactions of man to the stimuli of the universe" (1922 : 155).

The first fruit of the discovery was 'comparative philology'. Once the unity of the Indo-Aryan or Indo-Germanic languages was realised through the efforts of Jones, the founder of the

Asiatic Society of Bengal, Schlegel, Bopp and others, "the road was opened to the interpretation of ideas, ideals, rituals, customs, superstitions folk-lore, etc., on a more or less universal basis. This has ushered in the sciences of comparative religion, for which Max Müller's *Sacred Books of the East* series is chiefly responsible." (*ibid* : 155). It was followed by an examination the secular, economic, political and juristic institutions and theories with the methodology of comparative science. "A great impetus was", reiterated Sarkar, "imparted to social studies by the publication of the *Sacred Books of the East*. It has rendered inestimable service to the sciences of mythology and philology" (*ibid* : 270).

Sarkar however could not but conclude that "on the other hand, it is this series of books that has up till now offered the greatest impediments to the growth of a scientific comparative sociology. For it has diverted the attention of scholars "from the achievements of Oriental races in exact science, mathematico-physical, and physiologico-medical. It has also militated against the recognition by the Occident of the Oriental endevours in civic administration, social service, conciliar enterprise, industrial activity, and institutional life. Today Eur-America is obsessed by the notion that Asia has stood for non-secular religiosity all through the ages" (*idem*). And, Sarkar held Max Müller, the editor of the series, "personally responsible for a great part of this modern superstition" (*idem*),

Max Müller's *India : What can it teach us ?* appeared to Sarkar to suggest that the sole message of India "was the 'sublime' philosophy of other-worldlyism, quietism, despair ! This sweeping generalization is also summed up in a sentence of his *Chips from a German Workshop*. 'The sense that life is a dream or a burden is', says he, 'a notion which Buddha shares with every Hindu philosopher'" (*idem*)

Schopenhauer too preached that that the fundamental characteristics of Brahmanism and Buddhism are idealism and pessimism. Because of these two scholars "India has been treated in Eur-America as a synonym for mysticism or

pessimism....". Rather, the entire East became equated with Buddhism, "and Buddhism=mysticism and pessimism" (*idem*).

The serial, "From Herder to Sorokin" by Sarkar in the *Calcutta Review* (1928-29) ruthlessly exposed the fallacies committed by the Scholar Extraordinary in his *Chips*. Sarkar severely objected to what he considered the "hemispheriodal classification of race characteristics" in the following passage by Max Müller : "It is at all events a problem worth considering whether, as there is in nature a south and a north, there are not two hemispheres also in human nature,—both worth developing,—the active, combative and political on one side, the passive, meditative and philosophical on the other and for the solution of that problem no literature furnishes such ample materials as that of the Veda, beginning with hymns and ending with Upanishads. We enter into a new world—not always an attractive one, least of all to us. We are not called upon either to admire or to despise that ancient Vedic literature ; we have simply to study and to try to understand it" (cited in Sarkar, 1928 [1928-29] : 332 ; Sarkar's emphasis).

Sarkar got terribly annoyed with Max Müller since the latter appeared to suggest that secular virtues, materialistic joys and economic enterprises were the monopoly of the Europeans and "he manages to discover the exact opposite among the Hindus" in the passages like the following one : We all lead a fighting life...We point with inward satisfaction to what we and our ancestors have achieved by hard work... We imagine we have made life on earth quite perfect. But the lesson which both Brahmans and Buddhists are never tired of teaching is that this life is but a journey from one village to another—and not a resting place" (from the citation in Sarkar, 1928 : 332-333).

The insinuation that the Indians (and other Asians) are not meant for material success was found more explicit in the following observation by Max Müller : "If we turn our eyes to the East particularly to India, where life is, or at all events was no very severe struggle, while the climate was mild, the

soil fertile, where vegetable food in small quantities sufficed to keep the body in health and strength, where the simplest hut or cave in a forest was all the shelter required, and where social life never assumed gigantic, monstrous proportions of a London or Paris, but fulfilled itself within the narrow boundaries of village communities—was it not, I say, natural there, or if you like, was it not intended *there that another side of human nature should be developed—not the active, combative, acquisitive but the passive, the meditative and reflective?*" (quoted in Sarkar, loc cit ; i. e., 1928 [-29] : 333 ; 1928 : 107-108 ; emphasis added). Sarkar ever objected to this kind of "climatological, regionalistic, raciological" and other monistic and deterministic interpretations of history. Max Müller ignored the objective historical data while comparing Ancient India with Ancient Europe—"in fact he forgets the ancient and medieval conditions of Europe altogether and places India in a wrong sociological and cultural perspective by comparing it with modern Europe. It resulted into serious errors in comparative chronology which were in their turn responsible for the one-sided and incorrect views regarding the oriental societies".

"Arguing the past from the degenerate present, the scholars of Europe and America began to interpret the whole previous history and literature of the Hindus as a record of inertia, inactivity, subjectivism, other-worldliness. This misinterpretation has been perpetuated for the world in the writings, however meritorious on other grounds, of Max Müller and the indologists who followed in his wake" (1922 : 167). An erroneous view of the past and, consequently, a gloomy view of the present and the future of the Indians in the material world was all that could be expected from this "cheap indology popularized in the nineteenth century by Maine and Max Müller" (ibid. : 348).

Sarkar became so impatient with the indology propagated by Max Müller and his collaborators as he chastised *India : What Can It Teach Us ?* as "a Bible of chauvinism and race dogmatism" for those in the west who might feel for one

reason or another interested in India or in the East in general. The book epitomized the conventional philosophy that lay behind the propaganda that the East was the "white man's burden". It "helped *orientalisme*, indology and the study of things Asian to function as a handmaid to the purposes of western colonialists and Empire-builders in the East—by furnishing them with a gospel as to the *alleged disqualifications of the orientals (Indians) for economic energism and political self-assertion*" (1928-29—CR Dec 1928— : 331-332 ; 1928 : 105-6 ; emphasis added).

The comments above are, no doubt, very harsh. But they are worth the attention of students of Indian sociology for more than one reason. First, they do not prove to be totally baseless but are corroborated by the findings of the students of today. Secondly, they bring out the dangerous implications of the "domain assumptions" of the indologists subscribing to the views criticised in the comments. Thirdly, sociology of India lies according to many, "at the confluence of Sociology and Indology" (Dumont and Pocock, 1957 : 1) and the tradition of India is considered by many a sociologist to encompass the current socio-cultural milieu in the country and to act as a limiting factor on the nature and course of the possible changes therein. While looking back to the indological studies for a correct comprehension of the Indian tradition, the students of sociology must be aware of the "domain assumptions" of the different groups of indologists. Otherwise they may be misled.

Pratap Chandra, a student of Indian philosophy, observed how the initial bafflement of the westerners with the Hindu mind came to be replaced by (i) a move for proselytization preceded and accompanied by a kind of denigration of Hinduism as well as Buddhism and (ii) a sustained attempt at a moral justification of the continued occupation and exploitation of India by foreign occupiers of the country. A host of Christian missionaries, historians and scholars in indology came to serve, deliberately or unconsciously, both the processes. Even a serious indologist like Max Müller could not

overcome the temptation of serving his own religious faith. One of his letters to the then Secretary of State for India asks "The ancient religion of India is doomed, and if Christianity does not step in, whose fault will it be?" (quoted in Chandra, 1977 : 7). A discerning reader would detect without much difficulty the bias of Max Müller in some of his introductions to the volumes of the *Sacred Books of the East*. "In one, for instance, he took special pains to show that human sacrifice was not uncommon in ancient India" (Chandra 1977 : 6).

Though Chandra's work does not, even for once, mention the name of Benoy Kumar Sarkar or any work by him, there is a perfect echoing of Sarkar's views in the following remark by Chandra : "India's alleged 'otherworldliness' is partly the fond invention of those finding justification for the white-man's overlordship" (*ibid.* : 7). Chandra farther informs that Max Müller is reported to have appealed to a gathering of I. C. S. probationers to look after the poor Indians who could never govern themselves being, after all, otherworldly visionaries and renouncers of creature comforts (*idem*). And Max Muller was not all alone. Chandra mentions R. C. Majumdar's explanation of why Vincent Smith magnified the role of Harsha and dubbed him the last great emperor India saw. Smith's purpose was, according to Majumdar, to emphasise that India behaved only under a strong central authority which was provided in the modern times only by the British (cf. Sarkar, 1922 : 287).

Varieties of the above suggestion are available also in the writings of Arthur Koestler and Max Weber. After expressing his total disenchantment with India and Japan, as a result of his third experience, Koestler admitted that this time his disillusionment was more "reassuring" inasmuch as this served his psychological need for getting rid of the "Western guilt complex towards Asia." Weber (1958 : 325), too supplied, probably without intending it, grist to the colonialist mill, through his dark forebodings regarding the future of India (that lacked, according to him in this-worldly, national considerations) in the eventuality of the withdrawal of Pax Britannica from India.

As one goes through these findings of western intellectuals and scholars, one comes to appreciate all the more how sensitive an issue in what may be called Sociology of Indology or Sociology of Indian Sociology was boldly brought to the fore in Sarkar's criticisms of the indologists highlighting the spirituality of the Hindus or Indians to the utter neglect of the heights of success they achieved in the material field.

Indeed, one can well realise the importance of the work done by Sarkar in exposing the "background assumptions" and the "domain assumptions" implicit in the social theory enunciated in the writings of Max Müller and similar-minded indologists and sociologists, if one keeps in mind the following observation of Gouldner "To say that sociology is shaped by the background assumptions of the practitioners is only to say that they have a human vulnerability to prejudice. *These prejudices, however, may be even more difficult to escape than racial prejudice, insofar as they do not manifestly impair the interests of special groups whose struggle against the prejudice may heighten public awareness of it*" (1972: 33 ; emphasis added). The lullaby of the Indians' pacifism, quietism, sublimity, spirituality, religiosity, otherwordliness which was sung in the indological literature by Max Müller and his compatriots keeps the Indians insensitive to the hidden message in it, viz.. the Indians are temperamentally and culturally unsuit for an efficient handling of worldly matters, civic life and economic affairs and require, therefore, the tutelage of the European rulers who are practical-minded and efficient enough in managing the affairs of life in this world. Sarkar broke the spell of the lullaby and sensitized his countrymen to the hidden message.

Sarkar had a further contribution to the sociology of indology by analysing the "social career" of the thesis propounding the "spirituality" of the Indians and other Asians. Gouldner points out, "Background assumptions.....influence the *social career* of a theory, influencing the responses of those to whom it is communicated. For in some part, theories are accepted or rejected because of the background assumptions

embedded in them. In particular a social theory is more likely to be accepted by those who share the theory's background assumptions and find them agreeable" (op. cit. : 29). It is evident, and it was Sarkar who first made it explicit, that all the indologists and sociologists focussing on the spirituality of the Indians and other Asians shared the background assumption that "the East is East and the West is West" and some of them provided, in addition, a justification for the perpetuation of colonial domination of the east by the west. But, how is it that the image of an other-worldly India (Asia) assiduously built up by the occidental scholars came to be accepted by the Indians (Asians) themselves? While Sarkar hinted at one probable reason, viz., the ignorance of the Indians of the true nature of the background assumptions of many western indologists, he pointed out another, a more fundamental, cause behind it.

It has been earlier noticed that Sarkar could as early as 1914 detect that the idea of spiritual superiority of the Indians to the West "pandered to the unthinking vanity of the present day fallen orient" (1914 a : xii). In 1922 he came out with a more detailed analysis of the phenomenon. "During the nineteenth century...the people of India were divorced perforce from the vitalizing interests and responsibilities in every field of work. They had necessarily to fall back upon the super-sensual, the non-material, 'the spiritual'" (1922 : 166). They forgot that the spiritual worth is devoid of any meaning, if it is not grounded in the "physical basis of life", the economic and political. "It can be nothing better than a nerveless fancy, a backboneless mysticism, an imbecile subjectivism, or an idle speculation" (*idem*).

The Hindus of the period, according to Sarkar, entirely misunderstood the spirit of the Upanishads, Gita, Vedanta, and other philosophical bequests of their predecessors. The Indians, emasculated and demoralised as they had turned out to be by the pressure of circumstances, popularized a false doctrine of *maya* or "world as illusion" without understanding the sense or context of the original propounders. "They thus

helped transform the country into an asylum of incapables, a land of vegetating animalcules, or of mere stocks and stones. The wonder is that this absence of vertebral vigour was even regarded by them as a point of glory" (*ibid*).

The natives of India had to accept the hard reality of colonial domination by a European power and they came as a result to accept the fact that the Occidentals had become masters of the "this world". "So the Indians began to take pride in demonstrating their own superiority over the Westerners (at least in their own imagination) in some such terms as the following : 'Well, the philosophy of Europe and America is rooted in the enjoyment of the senses. You Occidentals are wedded to the interests of this little thing men call earth. But Hindu philosophy is grounded in self-restraint and self-sacrifice. We cultivate other-regarding ideals, our goal is renunciation, and our interests are in the Infinite and Hereafter.' This is the psychology of the slave. It is in such speculations that a subject race is bound to seek condolence" (*ibid* : 167).

Sarkar's language is biting but the objectivity in his analysis is not a whit impaired by it. His analysis of why the Indians accepted the stereotype of India's spirituality and the damages done by such an acceptance is buttressed by the findings of scholars of recent times. Bimal Krishna Matilal, currently the Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford, for example, notices the currency of the prejudice among the western scholars that critical thinking was unknown to India (and the East) and her (its) 'philosophy' was limited to primitive speculation. How to account for the misconception ? The fascination of the European pioneers studying Indian philosophy with "the highly speculative, metaphysical systems (which, in our opinion, fall in the area of overlap between religion and philosophy) may partly explain it" (Matilal, 1971 : 1). Moreover India, after a period of stagnation followed by several centuries of foreign domination, was facing the challenge of modern civilization and the superior technology of the west, and

as a result, desperately looking for an identity and way of self-assertion. Some of the national leaders of India at this stage sought an escape in mystical aura of so-called Indian 'spirituality'. All these are unfortunate historical facts—unfortunate because Indian philosophy, as a result of this movement, has remained identified with mysticism and mistakenly thought to be inseparable from religion" (idem ; emphases added).

When a scholar of today has to lament, as is demonstrated above, over the confusion of the Indian thought with sheer mysticism and spiritualism in the same terms as were uttered by Sarkar almost half a century ago, the gravity of the situation becomes evident. And the situation was graver still at the time of Sarkar. It speaks volumes for Sarkar's intellectual incisiveness to have discovered the sombreness of the situation created through the preachings of western scholars about the religiosity of the Indians and almost single-handedly exposed and fought against it. The importance of Sarkar's contribution to a proper understanding of the Indian society and culture becomes clear from the following observation of Hiren Mukherjee, a noted scholar-politician of the Communist Party of India, where the latter echoes many of the utterances made by Sarkar sixtytwo years ago. "In the bad old days of India's subjection to foreign rule it was not unnatural to seek some patriotic salve in contemplation of the country's storied past as a partial compensation for the shame and sorrows of unfreedom. The older generation of Indians today can easily recall the humiliation that used, not too long ago, to cast an evil shadow on their lives. It was not perhaps very rational but it was natural enough when, over seventythree years ago, an eloquent nationalist, stung by the reproach of 'Western' superiority, allegedly also ineluctable, burst into flaming rhetoric that bears recital : 'Great in the greatness of her adversity, splendid even in her misery and desolation of her age, radiant with a light which is not of this world, what cares she [India] for the ephemeral dominance which the mushroom nations of yesterday perk and flaunt before her face ?' ...There is in this exclamation of passionate patriotic

prise a clear hint of the soporific injection, deliberate or no, by many western Orientalists like Max Müller, the injection into India's elite of the idea of India's famed 'spirituality' which meant concern for 'a life, not of this life only, but a transfigured and eternal life (Max Müller)—*disavowal*, that is to say, of the activism that India needed, activism allegedly out of consonance with India's past which is doubtless linked with her present (1984 : 99 ; emphases added).

Sarkar summoned his countrymen to shake off the stupor and meet, like their predecessors, the challenges of life on this earth. While he unsparingly exposed the fallacies of the philosophers, historians and indologists harping only on the spiritualism of the Hindus, he unfurled the pageantry of a life which was once lived by the people of India and which was full of virility and vibrant with intense activities for success in mundane spheres including the political and the economic.

V

In Euro-America it has been the tradition of scholarship for historians of philosophy "to devote attention to political, economic, social and legal speculations along with the speculations on man, nature, knowledge, mind, truth, beauty, God etc. No account of Greek philosophy is held to be complete which overlooks the contribution of the Greek moralists or philosophers to political or social thought" (Sarkar, 1937 a : 631). Similarly, attempts to "bring economics and politics in contact with general philosophy" are clearly discernible in the studies of the beginnings of modern philosophy. In the field of indology, however, works "dealing with the ideas of ancient or medieval Indian thinkers on body, mind, soul, universe, reasoning, intuition, meditation etc. have been systematically practising non-cooperation with the Hindu ideas of property, state, society and law, as well as of fine arts, crafts, industries and so forth such as form the subjectmatter of *vārttā, sīlpa and vāstu sāstras.*" (*ibid.* : 632). As a result, it is hard to find any comprehensive treatment of Hindu

philosophy ; and it is one of the main reasons for one-sided and, therefore, fallacious and misleading interpretations of the Hindu mind and its creations.

The aforesaid fallacy of using one rule for Paul and another for Peter is bred, in the first place, by the exclusive engagement of scholars with the element of spirituality in the Oriental philosophies. But those "modern treatises dealing with Hindu philosophy which have bestowed attention on, say, *Moksha* (salvation) to the exclusion of the other three categories in the philosophical *Chaturvarga* (*quadrivium*) of *purushartha* (the desirables of man), namely, *dharma* (law, duty, *mores*), *artha* (economico-political interests), and *kama* (sex life) can but furnish partial, to say the least, unjust and erroneous pictures about Hindu thought and institutions" (*idem*). The second source of the fallacy lies in a certain kind of superiority complex of the occidental races who vanquished the people in the orient through their superior military power and were interested in the perpetuation of their domination. "Christian missionaries and even scientists of research societies take", Sarkar lamented, "a morbid delight in picking up the worst features of oriental life and thought. Ultimately through the movies, theatres, and journals, Asia has become to their nationals a synonym for immorality, sensuousness, ignorance and superstition" (1922 : 12). In sharp contrast (or in keeping (?)) with this attitude, the western scholars would remain "blind to the truth that from the adultery among the gods described, e.g., in the *Odyssey* (Book VIII) and the erotic frescoes from Pompeii in the national museum of Naples down to the sex-exciting advertisements of today founded on the principles of experimental psychology (applied to business) the erotics of an intense and direct as well as suggestive character has had a continuous sway throughout the occidental world" (*ibid.* : 13). A series of illustrations, like the preceding one, of the "systematic mal-application" of the comparative method in estimating the values of the Eastern and Western achievements is provided by Sarkar.

Three kinds of fallacies are detected by Sarkar in the use of the comparative method by the Western scholars and their Indian followers in their analyses of Western and Eastern cultures. First, these scholars do not consider the same class of facts in the comparative analyses referred to. They are found more often than not comparing the superstitions of the Orient with the rationalism of the Occident, while they ignore the rationalism of the Orient and maintain studied silence on the superstitions of the Occident. The ideas and activities of the higher intellectual and economic grades of the Occident are contrasted with those of the illiterate and pauper and half-fed masses of the Orient. "But intellectual fairness demands that mentality and morality should be compared under 'the same condition of temperature and pressure'" (*ibid.* : 14).

Secondly, the Euro-American sociologists do not apply the same instrument of interpretation to the data of the Oriental societies as to those of the Occidental societies. "If infanticide (Recommended by Lykurgus, Solon, Plato and Aristotle ; Lecky, *European Morals*. Vol. II, p. 26), superstition, sexuality for instance have to be explained away or justified in one group of races by 'historical criticism', or by anthropological investigations, or on the strength of studies in adolescence, Freudianism, psychoanalysis, and so forth, these must be treated in the same way in the other instances as well" (*idem*).

Thirdly, the western scholars are not, according to Sarkar, sufficiently well-grounded in "comparative chronology". They "do not proceed to the work of striking a balance between the claims of the East and the West, age by age, i. e., idea by idea and institution by institution in a time series" (*ibid.* : 14-15 ; emphasis added). As a result, they compare the old conditions of the Orient with the latest achievements of the Occident, and they ignore, as Benoy Kumar repeatedly pointed out, the fact that it is only in very recent times that the same old conditions disappeared from the West.

Sarkar warned that comparative method is at best only a method, and unless used with discrimination, like statistics it

can be made to prove anything one wishes to prove. "In the manner of experiments in a chemical laboratory, the social comparisons should be instituted under definitely known conditions , and as in mathematics, the items to be compared should be brought to a common denominator.....a fossil or a mummy must not be compared with organisms that can react to the environmental stimuli, nor a master be compared with a slave,—unless the basis of comparison be categorically stated and the conditions of comparison well defined" (Sarkar, 1922 a : 5).

Now, the brightest period of occidental civilization, i. e., the time spanning the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth, happened to be, according to Sarkar, the darkest period of the orient. "Asia today is indisputably a continent of slaves..." (*idem*). In the realm of culture also, particularly in the field of scientific and technological knowledge, Asia's inferiority to Euro-American was patent. Sarkar wondered whether under the above conditions it was possible for Euro-American scholars to evaluate past Asian achievements in science, industry, politics, art and philosophy at their proper worth. "Can it be conceived that dominant races should be able to appreciate the human values in the life processes of emasculated slaves ? Here is an elementary fact in the psychology of successful nations that is chiefly responsible for the current fallacies in comparative sociology" (*ibid.* : 6).

The western scholars would definitely agree that the principles of "higher criticism" rule out any generalization regarding the entire course of occidental civilization in terms of the vices and infirmities of character noticed in the people of any one region in the west or in any particular stage of its evolution, as depicted in epics like the *Iliad* of Homer. or in any other work. But these principles are treated with non-chalance by the same western scholars when they interpret the whole gamut of Asian history in the light of the weakness of the Asian peoples of modern times on the material plane. "The injustice of this method { of Western

scholars] ...has contributed to the rupture of fellow-feeling between the East and the West. And the futurists of Young Asia have their permanent fountain of inspiration in the intellectual pain and ill-treatment they have been accustomed to get from Eur-America" (Sarkar, 1922 : 6 ; parenthesis added).

Euro-America could inflict this injustice and ill-treatment on Asia because they knew "that Young Asia is unarmed and disarmed" (*ibid.* : 21). A glaring example of how the powerful occident foisted its own interpretations of history on an weak Asia was the attempt at interpreting the Treaty of Nanking that opened the floodgate of western invasions of China as an act of opening of China or breaking her isolation. The truth was that China had, since time immemorial, had innumerable contacts with the world outside. And she had been hospitable to the Europeans as well. It was only in 1724 that China had to close her doors to the Christians in order to save herself against the latter's political intrigues. The enraged white races, thereupon, forced open the doors of China. The Treaty of Nanking only legitimized the series of aggressions on China, a great Asian country, by the western powers which the latter sought to justify "on [pseudo] scientific ethnological grounds" (*ibid.* : 12). In contrast with it the U.S.A. denied in 1917 entrance to the peaceful and industrious "but militarily impotent or navally weak people of Asia" (*idem*). Thus, the only logic that held good in East-West relationship was the logic of military strength. And the final answer to the arrogant and unjust behaviour of the west to Asia lay in the earning of political freedom by the Asian countries and only then the demand of Young Asia would be fulfilled. "The demand of Young Asia is justice—a justice that is to be interpreted by itself on the achievements of its own heroes". (*ibid.* : 22).

Meanwhile, a change in the attitude of western scholars was called for to prevent the further worsening of east-west relationship. "First, there must be an ethical revolution in Eur-America" (*idem*). The Occident must learn to treat the Orient with a modicum of respect and apply the

same standards in evaluating the achievements of men in both the east and the west. Secondly, "there must be a psychological revolution in Eur-America...The fact of nineteenth century success and overlordship must be banished from the field of scholarship : Oriental culture has to be weighed in the balance under the same conditions of study as the Occidental" (*idem*).

Sarkar presented a demonstration of the kind of historiography of the life of the people in ancient and mediaeval India in his study of the "positive background" of the Hindus and their political institutions and theories. Sarkar claimed a pioneering role in this area. "The first edition of the present work, '*The Positive Background of Hindu Sociology*' (Allahabad 1914) or rather the chapters that were published as magazine articles in Calcutta, Madras, Allahabad, Dacca etc. during 1911-13 raised perhaps the first cry in favour of a reform of indology both as regards Hindu materialism as well as parallelism with the western culture-systems" (1937 a : 275, f. n., 3). But Sarkar was not the only one to raise the cry during the period referred to (cf. Sharma, 1959, ch. 1). Indeed, he himself admitted elsewhere in the same work, "It was in connection with the work at the National Council of Education, Bengal, established during 1905-06 as an expression and embodiment of national awakening known as the *Swadeshi Movement* that the present author's studies in Hindu culture as well as English translation of the *Sukraniti* were undertaken in 1907....These studies ...were carried on in the main in an atmosphere of co-operative research in Calcutta...To this research complex belonged Radhakumud Mookerji's studies in Hindu shipping and the geographical unity of India under the inspiration of Satis Chandra Mukerjee of the Dawn Society (1903-06) and the National Council of Education, as well as Narendra Nath Law's investigations into the *Arthashastra* and Kashi Prasad Jayaswal's papers on Hindu Coronation rituals and other aspects of Hindu polity (1911-1913). That was the atmosphere of what may be described as an almost homogeneous and

undifferentiated, although entirely informal, ‘school’ of Hindu culture and social sciences of Calcutta” (1937a : 220-221). This admission is a palpable contradiction of the immediately preceding claim by Sarkar as also of his portrayal of the milieu of Mukerjee and the Dawn Society as the one pervaded by a one-sided accentuation of the spiritual glory of ancient India (cf. sup. 37-38).

The fact was that, as far back as 1889, Hopkins, the great American savant, challenged Max Müller’s suggestion regarding the ultra-religiosity of the Hindus. During the last three decades of the 19th century Bhagwan Lal Indraji, R. G. Bhandarkar, R. L. Mitra and B. G. Tilak strived hard to expose the falsity of the imperialist ideology stressing the otherworldliness of the Indians, their lack of ability to manage the worldly affairs and their habitual servility to autocratic rule and, eventually, justifying the autocratic rule of the British over the Indians. R. C. Dutt (in 1887), P. N. Singh (in 1894), A. C. Das (in 1907) tried to prove the existence of responsible government and local self-government in ancient India. K. P. Jayswal’s articles in the *Modern Review* between 1912 and 1915 and finally his book, *Hindu Polity*, in 1924 presented “the first solid ideological case for complete independence and a republican form of government in India” (Sharma, op. cit. : 5).

If the nationalist historians were busy with a re-examination of the ancient (and also mediaeval) history of India to refute the charge of overreligiosity of the Hindus and prove their political genius, the climate of opinion in the country was, nonetheless, haunted by the ideas of an essential difference between the east and the west and the Vivekanandian gospel of India’s spiritual superiority to the West and her *spiritual conquest* of the latter (Sarkar, 1932 a, vol. II : 423-426). Sarkar’s initial enchantment with the spiritualism of the Hindus gave way to his preoccupation with their ideas of materialism, when he started translating the *Sukraniti*. Thenceforth Sarkar ever deplored that people in their obsession with “spiritualism” in Hindu literature continued to neglect

its innumerable dicta of a pragmatic nature like the following one in the *Mahabharata* : “যখন দুর্বল ধাকিবে, ঘাড়ে করিয়া লইয়া যাইবে, কিন্তু যখন সবল হইবে তখন ডিমকে পাহাড়ের গায়ে ফেমন চূণ” করা যায়, শত্রুকে সেইরকম আছড়াইয়া মারিবে ।” (সরকার, ১৯৩২ ক, ন. বা. গো. প. ২৩ খন্দ : ৪২৬) ; that is, “When you are weak, carry the enemy on your shoulder. But the moment you gather strength, smash the enemy violently throwing him down in the manner in which an egg is broken into pieces by dashing it against a rock” (Sarkar, 1932 a, Vol. II : 426). It became his life’s mission to highlight that aspect of Hindu society and culture which gave birth to such dicta.

In the Foreword to his translation of the *Sukraniti* Sarkar acknowledged his “indebtedness to Pandit Jogendranath Tarka-Sāmkhya-Vedāntatirtha of Susung (Mymensingh), with whom I read portions of *Sukranīti*, *Rāja-tarangini*, some of the Puranas, and other Sanskrit works” (1914b : ii). Pandit Yogendranath Bagchi himself was enthusiastic about the study of dandanīti or arthasastras of the Hindus and recorded his ideas about the same in *আচীন ভারতের দণ্ডনীতি* (Dandanīti in Ancient India) (1356 B. S ; 1949 A. D). In his reminiscences, *বিদ্যাবংশ* (Vidyāvamsa or the Lineage of the Teacher and his Pupils), he recalls how meticulously Benoy Kumar perused the meaning of each and every sloka of the Sanskrit works like Kāmandakanītis’astrā, Śuklanītisāra and Kirātarjunīya with assistance from him in his younger days (Bagchi, 1960:18). Besides Jogendranath, those who inspired Sarkar to focus on Hindu ideas of politics and materialism included Brajendra Nath Seal, the famous Indian philosopher who himself wrote on the Hindu ideas of science and Major Baman Das Basu, the Editor of the series, *The Sacred Books of the Hindus*, which included Sarkar’s translation of the *Sukranīti*.

The *Sukranīti* appeared to Sarkar to be “really a study of Hindu Positivism, the human, secular and worldly elements in Hindu national life and culture...as opposed to its transcendental foreground and superstructure” (1914 a : xv) and led him to examine the Hindu socio-economic and socio-

political life. Any work on Sarkar's political ideas (e.g., Bandyopadhyay, 1985) or his ideas of history remains incomplete and unsatisfactory without an adequate reference to his thoughts regarding the political genius of the Hindus of the antiquity and the methods suggested, and to a certain extent followed, by him to unravel the same. Sarkar called for greater attention to epigraphic, numismatic and archaeological evidence for a proper assessment of the political achievements of the Hindus, which would "cry halt" to such suggestions as that the ideas of state, democracy or voting had been the exclusive properties of the Greek mind and were alien to the Hindus of ancient times. He declared his *Political Institutions and Theories of the Hindus* (portions of which were repeated in his *Creative India* (1937 : chs. II & III) and elsewhere (e.g., Sarkar, 1962 [1937])) "perhaps the first attempt at appraising, interpreting and laicizing the discoveries of *Indianisme* for students of political science, and thereby introducing to the scientific world the people of ancient India as peers of the Greeks and Romans and their mediaeval successors down to the ancient regime, both in constitution making and in speculation on the state" (1922 a : viii). Apart from a description of the political institutions of the Hindus, the treatise aimed at, "and this perhaps is more important for political science, the logical analysis of Hindu institutions and concepts with proper orientation to western politics and political theories..." (ibid. : ix).

The advocacy of studying the political institutions and ideas of the Hindus of the past from a comparative viewpoint is not calculated "to pin sociology down to the past. For comparative politics is not necrology,—the science of dead matter, not archaeology—the study of fossils and paleontological phenomena. It is the science of l'élan de la vie, that one touch of Nature which makes the whole world kin" (ibid. : 4). It would sensitize its perusers to the creative genius of human will in the arena of political ideas and activities across time and space. Serious students of this comparative politics will come to the ineluctable conclusion that "the

behavioristic psychology of the races is essentially similar. Man as a political animal has responded to the stimuli of the objective universe in much the same way in the East and the West" (*idem*).

VII

The importance of the kind of comparative politics envisaged by Sarkar becomes appreciable from the frank admission of Maxey, an American author of a well known text on the history of political philosophy, that Hindu political thought has received a very shabby treatment at the hands of western commentators. Since they lacked in a detached view of the political side of the Indian life and character, the people of India have been represented in their writings "as being so intensely preoccupied with fantastic and stupefactive religions as to be inherently unfitted for political responsibilities, and the political history of India, from the accounts of Western writers, would seem to be a delirious tale, full of the sound and fury of desolating civil wars and bloody religious struggles, but signifying nothing except sordid mis-government until the British took hold and put things in order" (Maxey, 1959 : 21-22).

In order to understand India and her political history one must, suggested Sarkar, apply to one's eyes corrective lenses through which one may see certain facts not generally comprehended outside India. The first is that India, like Europe, has always been a vast continental area (the size and population being about the same as those of Europe minus Russia) comprising many races, religions and political entities (Sarkar, 1918 : 487). Secondly, India has had much the same sort of history as Europe. Considering the history of Europe as a whole, which is the way unbiased observers should take the history of India, one may discover in any corresponding period of time in Europe just about as many bloody and internecine wars, dynastic struggles and religious broils as may be found in India (*ibid.* : 486 & 487 ; Sarkar, 1922 a : 22-23). The third rectification needed is that the

backwardness of India as compared with the occidental countries is of recent origin, dating only from about the middle of the nineteenth century, when the western world began to reap the full benefits of the Industrial Revolution (Sarkar, 1918 : 482-483).

India had the misfortune of falling in a state of disorder not unlike that of Europe during the Thirty Years' War or, say, the First World War at a time when powerful European states went out for political expansion and economic imperialism. Being better organised at the time than any of the powers in India or countries of Asia and, thanks to the Industrial Revolution, far better implemented, the European powers could overrun India and many other parts of Asia, almost without any resistance from any quarter, much as the invading Huns and Saracens had been able to do in Europe in earlier centuries (1922a : 21-22).

The consequent dependency of India in the recent past should not, therefore, blind anybody to the fact that the political history of India is more ancient than that of Europe and is not barren in political ideas. During its many centuries of political independence the Indian continent witnessed the growth and decline of political units of every conceivable form and magnitude, from tiny tribal or village commonwealths to mighty empires comparable in area, population, and power with any the world has known before the Industrial Revolution. "The Hindu Alexanders, Caesars, Constantines, Charlemagnes and Frederick Barbarossas," observed Sarkar, "could easily challenge comparison with their western peers on their own terms of *sakti-yoga* or *Machtpolitik*" (1922a : 17 and 1937 : 154).

Impartial observers will find in Asian history the same struggles and tribulations through which the European races have passed (1918 : 483). It is impossible to cite a single institution or idea in the west for which a "parallel or replica is not to be found" in the East. "And no political weakness can be cited in Asia of which there is no double in Eur-America" (1922a : 8). To recognise "this essential

parallelism and pragmatic identity" in political ideas and events in the two hemispheres the scholars are required "first, to practise scientific detachment from the conditions of life in which they are living today; secondly, to master the actual facts of political development and speculation in Asia; and thirdly, to place them in the perspective of occidental *Realpolitik* and 'pious wish', epoch by epoch, area by area, and item by item" (*idem*). The western scholars should readily set aside the erroneous postulate that the whole development of Asian polity is "nothing but an unchanging record of semi-savage, i.e., almost unpolitical or pre-political group-life and the entire literature of oriental political thought [is] at best but common place speculation pervaded by theocratic ideas" (*ibid.* : 8-9 ; 1918 : 483). The oriental scholars championing the cause of Indian nationalism or Chinese Revolution should, on the other hand, give up their zealousness to demonstrate every modern democratic theory and republican institution "in the teachings of Confucius and Mencius, Sukra and Manu and clan-republics and village commonwealths of the Orient" (1922a 9 ; 1918 . 483).

Saito noted, of course, the difficulty that in "all our investigations bearing on the past or on the present we are bound consciously or unconsciously to institute comparisons with Euro-American phenomena. The very act that we have always to use modern words of western origin in order to translate, paraphrase or explain the things of Oriental growth, compels our studies to become comparative as a matter of course" (1921 (1921) : 154). He also observed that notwithstanding the "formidable divergences between the past and the present", i.e., in political ideas and actual conditions many recent interpreters strenuously work to place "the modern theories not only 'back to Aristotle', but also in the adumbrations of the schoolmen and church fathers" (1921 : 27).

No wonder then that there would be attempts at finding affinity between the Hindu writers of ancient and mediaeval periods and the modern Euro-American authors in political

ideas. And Sarkar himself indulged at times in such attempts (ibid. : 28). In this connection he, however, put forward certain fundamental considerations.

"Machiavelli's *Prince* could not", wrote Sarkar, be "the work of an Athenian of the Periclean age, just as *Germany and the Next War* could not be the outcome of a mediaeval Russian brain under Tartar domination, nor the labour laws of Lenin's proletarian democracy have a place in the *De Monarchia* of Dante. Notions like these are first postulates to the modern student of social phenomena, unless he chooses to ignore the conclusions of biology on the relations between the vital principle and the stimuli, Indology also can hardly afford to disregard these axiomatic truisms..." (ibid. : 64). There is an obvious hint at the idea of social location of ideas in the statement. Indeed, some rudiments of sociology of knowledge may be discerned at places in Sarkar's writings (e.g., 1921(26) : 143-155). He enquired "as to how far the ancient and mediaeval Hindus, if at all, saw into the modern problems and suggested modern solutions" (ibid. : 144). The same question was addressed by him to those western writers on western topics who had the tendency to trace the modern thought back to the remotest periods of antiquity. Scholars may visualize in such cases an element of anticipation. But the idea of anticipation implies (1) an identity of phenomenon, and (2) a sequence of time, i.e., an order of succession. While every care should be taken to settle questions involving the second aspect, the first aspect is no less problematical. Are we to understand", Sarkar asked, "that the reactions of the mediaeval and ancient Hindu brain or nervous system to the realities of the universe agree with those of the European idealists of the nineteenth century and after?" (ibid. : 146). According to him, any attempt at indicating "the anticipations of modern (meaning thereby post-Kantian and or at times even post-Baconian) thought in ancient and mediaeval Hindu systems can lead but to establishing an equation where the two terms do not coincide. And here it were well to note...

that a similar fallacy would consist in trying to prove that the modern Europeans were ‘anticipated’ by their mediaeval and classical predecessors” (*ibid.* : 148). The reason is that there is a huge gulf in between the time of Plato and Manu and the epoch of Kant and Bradley ; “and the bridge that might span it will have to be measured by the fifteen hundred to two thousand years of mankind’s wear and tear in the realm of realities, such as are registered by the experimental research activities of Torricelli at one end and the *digvijaya* (world conquest) of the ideas of 1789 and the onset of industrial revolution at the other” (*ibid.* : 151-152). Sarkar further pointed out that the problem of place is as important as the problem of time ‘especially with regard to the treatises of the niti-sāstra class.... It is obvious that a statute-book, or penal code or gazetteer, compiled under the auspices of Maratha vice-royalty in Deccan or Southern India could not be the same as that of Samudragupta, the Indian Napolean’s executive council at Pataliputra. The ‘relativity’ of *niti-sastras*, whether considered as documents of *Realpolitik* or as more or less idealistic works, must have to be a postulate in indology as a deduction from the principles on which the present study is based’ (*ibid.* : 67). The scholars examining any treatise of ancient or mediaeval India dealing with political or economic matters must try “to indicate the nexus of necessity or historic causality between the doctrines of the treatise and the date (and *locale*) suggested. The work must have to be explained, in short, as psychologically related to the cultural perspective and constitutional *milieu*” (*ibid.* : 69). For, the “Time-spirit and Place-Spirit are too powerful to be ignored by human genius even if it consciously attempts it” (1914a : 2-3).

At the same time, Sarkar was perhaps troubled by the fear of the Indians’ being dubbed primitive in case their differences from the western people were established. He therefore, hastened to add, “So far as the the East and West are concerned,—from the standpoint of objective history an

enormous amount of analogies and substantial identities or uniformities could, indeed, be discovered in economic background, social and religious institutions, politics, political ideals and general philosophizings. But, while the ‘horizontal’ uniformity was unquestionable, the diversity in ‘vertical’ strands, in other words, in the phenomena of growth in the same region from epoch to epoch, was no less unquestionably a settled fact. An historical world-view that would fail to mark the different stages in the evolution of a particular region or race through the ages would be untrue to reality,” (1921 (26) : 140-41 ; emphasis added). “The difference lies”, Sarkar repeated, “really not between continent and continent or race and race but between epoch and epoch” (*ibid* : 148).

The “Indianists” should, therefore, take every caution against the uncritical use of terms and concepts of a different age and clime in the description and analysis of the institutions and ideas of the Hindus of the yore, For example, the idea of relativity was noticed by Haldane in more than one Indian system of thought. But this idea of relativity found both in Greek and Hindu philosophical systems is not, pointed out Sarkar, the same stuff as Einstein’s Relativity, “as specialists including Haldane would admit”(*ibid.* : 149). Similarly, the notion of atoms as conceived by Kanada and Democritus is not to be regarded as an anticipation of the atomic theory of modern scientists. One may at best say in such cases that certain words used in modern parlours were known among the ancients. Simultaneously, one should note that “one and the same word has been used by the human race to indicate things which have hardly anything in common” (*idem*). In a history of theories and doctrines “one cannot be too cautious against the inertia of misleading words. There is such a thing as philosophical dynamics, i. e., the progressive march of the mind, which must have to be safeguarded from the encroachments of philological statics” (*ibid.* : 152). In using the terms like good, truth, God, mind, soul, king, village, marriage, revolution, freedom, democracy, etc., “one must

have to be sure of the substantial elements of each concept with special reference to their changes from epoch to epoch" (*ibid.* : 149) in order to avoid vague and meaningless analogies in the ideas of the people of modern times and of the people of ancient and mediaeval periods.

Closely related with the above problems is the question regarding the evidential value of the literature of ancient and mediaeval India, which is generally consulted and cited by the students of ancient and mediaeval history of India. Sarkar expressed doubts "if the class of writings called Dharmasastras, Arthasastras and Nitisastras to which Sukraniiti belongs were (1) the work of a single individual or school and (2) were ever Gazetters designed to embody the actual state of things, or Statute-Books meant for the guidance of people and rulers of any particular epoch or region" (1914a : 2). Nitisastra or kindred literature is "what in modern phraseology would be called a 'normative' science dealing with what 'should be' as opposed to what 'is' or 'has been'..." (*ibid.* : 19). Sarkar was in this case patently influenced by Elphinstone (*History of India*, p. 12 (1889), cited in Sarkar, *op. cit.* : 2). He, of course, elaborated the point raised by Elphinstone. It is, according to him, "difficult to determine (as has been done with regard to the ancient and mediaeval works in European political literature) which portions of these *Artha-sastras* and *Neeti sastras* are descriptive-historical, and which are normative, utopian or idealistic, because in the present state of Indian archaeology it is not yet possible in all cases to 'check' the evidences of literature by reference to known facts" (1918 : 491 ; also cf. Sarkar, 1921 (26) : 161, 163, 169, 171-75, 205, 208-9, 212-13, 220-23). The literature of dharma-sastras or nitisastras should better be viewed as the "contribution of intellectuals to the theories of society, state, law, morals", etc., or as their analyses of "ideals and institutions" and/or as enunciation by them of "the ideals of life, futuristic dreams of world reconstruction" including petty platitudes and moralisms. "But since no philosophical work can be

absolutely independent of time and space, it is not improbable that some of the positive laws, morals and institutions of the country have left their stamp on these sastras. But how to find out which passages in these texts refer to actualities?" (Sarkar, (1921 (26) : 175). The key probably lies in finding corroboration in contemporary history as reflected in the inscriptions.

A judicious application of "historical criticism" admitted Sarkar, may undoubtedly "wring some *institutional* material" out of the mass of niti-sastras (and dharma-sastras). But "an indiscriminate use of the sociological evidences embodied in these books can", he cautioned. "lead only to a confusion of juristic ideas, constitutional theories, or political philosophies with actual laws of the land, civic practices, or administrative machineries" (1921 : 22). One must not attach "an institutional value to every statement in the sastras" (*idem*). In the absence of undisputed archaeological evidence it is very difficult to distinguish the passages describing "the conscious and positive 'will' of the state (rajnam-ajna) or actual laws" and the immemorial customs from those containing "pious wishes" of the Hindu Ciceros and Senecas..." (1922a : 74). Similarly the evidential value of the Prakrit treatises on politics and law as well as the Sanskrit epics and Pali birth-stories like the *Jatakas* "in a portrayal of *Realpolitik* is as a rule very questionable" (*ibid.* : VIII). The concrete anecdotes in the *jatakas* or the epics or the *Puranas* may be treated as "something like 'illustrative' material indicating more or less the kind of human life which was quite conceivable in the estimation of the authors and the readers" (1921 (26) : 174). Secondly, these realistic story-books contain a vast body of "general ideas, maxims, moralisings, truisms, and first postulates which may be taken to stand for philosophical or idealistic background of the people" (*idem*). Sarkar's repeated insistence on the observance of methodological rigour in dealing with the 'data' culled from literature in understanding the reality in ancient and

mediaeval India becomes appreciable in view of its absence from the writings of some of the authors of recent times in sociology (e.g., Motwani, 1970 ; Duttgupta, 1972 : Ch. 1).

The few volumes of historical texts in India of the past like Kalhana's *Raja-tarangini* deserve, according to Sarkar, a special consideration. The contemporary reports on the Indian socio-political life by the foreigners beginning with the Greeks and coming down to the Moslems are valuable sources of information regarding Hindu history. But one should not be carried away, Sarkar warned, by the statements in these writings of foreigners on India. "This literature is the record of impressions gathered by a traveller while spending some time in different parts of the country" (1921(26) : 175). The students will "have to cross-examine the authors at every point to ascertain sources and possibilities of their information" (*idem*). One must always be "prepared for a greater or less amount of 'personal equation' and professional idiosyncrasy in every foreign book and therefore be ready to place a certain discount on its authenticity as on objective record of truth..." (*idem*). Moreover, if there is a discrepancy between a treatise by the native scholars, say, Kautilya's *Artha-sastra*, and an account by a foreign traveller, e.g., the *Indika* by Megasthenes, regarding a particular period in Indian history, there is no reason to place a greater reliance on the authenticity of the latter than on the former or to believe that one (say, the *Indika*) is a true account of the particular period (the Maurya) and the other belonged to some other age. It is quite probable that "the same sets of data may have led to two different reports. 'We are but parts and can see only but parts'. There is further nothing inconceivable in two eye-witnesses furnishing two entirely different evidences on one and the same event" (*ibid.* : 208). The Arthashastra might be dealing with the ideal rather than actual conditions of political life. But the *Indika* does not necessarily contain the whole truth about the reality. Rather, regarding the Arthashastra it may be said that it

"does not claim the authority of a tourist's account in regard to certain men and manners of a particular epoch or race" (*idem*).

VIII

The study of the political institutions and socio-economic conditions in ancient and mediaeval India according to the historico-comparative method delineated above would contradict the nineteenth century generalization about the Orient "as the land exclusively of despotism and as the only home of despotism" (1921 : 62) in view of the "tenacity of monarchy" generally of an irresponsible, autocratic character throughout the entire political history of Europe ((1922a : 10-12). An unbiased enquiry into the character of the Hindu States would reveal, Sarkar emphatically declared, that they were thoroughly secular. "In India, paradoxical as it may seem to pre-conceived notions, religion is not known to have often dominated political history or philosophy. Politics were invariably independent of theology ; nor did priests interfere in the civil administration as a matter of right, temporal or spiritual" (1922a : 13-14 & 1937 : 148-49). The only theocracy, strictly so called, in the history of Hindustan was the "quasi-religious staatal organization" of the Sikhs. "Even under the Asoka the Great, Harṣa-vardhana, and Dharmapāla, the supreme dignity of the empire as a worldly organism was not sacrificed to the personal religiosity of the crowned heads" (1922a : 14 ; 1937 : 149-50). Consequently, the Hindu political development never experienced the long-drawn conflict between the ecclesiastical bodies and the emperors or kings, which marked the occidental history. "Hindu monarchs with non-Hindu officers, non-Hindu Princes with Hindu ministers and generals have been the norm in Hindu History". The functions of the priests were confined "to the private religious life of the Royal families and the people... [and] to the administration of social and national festivals" (1922a : 14 ; 1937 : 150).

Keeping in mind the above characterization of the Hindu

States, one might enumerate, naming one by one, the great kingdoms and empires of the Hindus from the time of Asoka down to the advent of Islam in India which have made the the history of India rich and varied in political experience (1918 : 485 ; 1937 : 151-53). The Hindus in different parts of India gave at different points of time proofs of their political resilience even in the face of Moslem expansion in India. And, what is more important to note is that during "*this period of tug-of-war between the Hindus and Islam no part of India came to be subject to a 'foreign power'.* The Mussalmans were as much the children of the soil as the original inhabitants. Neither the Sultanate of Delhi (1200-1526) nor the Moghul monarchy that replaced it was in any sense, '*the government of one people by another*'...*The Moghul period of Indian history was one of the most creative epochs of civilization. For the people of India it was an era of prosperity, material and intellectual.* The epoch, known generally as the age of Indo-Saracenic Renaissance looms therefore as large in the consciousness of the Young India of today as does the age of the Vikramadityan sārva-bhaumas. The policy of the Moslem states was secular and the personal bigotry and intolerance of some of the rulers were not more frequent than were the fanaticism and i. quisitionism of Christian monarchs of contemporary Europe..." (Sarkar 1922a : 18-19 : 1937 : 156-57, emphasis added). Passages like the preceding one indicate that Sarkar was not a narrow-minded Hindu revivalist, though he did not all through maintain the spirit expressed here (cf. Sarkar, 1914a : 210-211 ; 1949 : 160-161).

Any account of the state system of ancient India must also include the many ganas or republics, autonomous city sovereignties and Independent clan-commonwealths (from C. 600 B.C. to C. 350 A.D.), as depicted in the Vedic literature, Buddhist and Jaina texts and the *Mahabharata*. "No generation in ancient India was, however, without its Sārva-bhauma, Chakravarti, or Chaturānta", i. e., world-ruler who with his well-organised army, well regulated administra-

tive machinery and system of finance and long reign sought to ensure *pax sarva-bhaumica* or peace of the world empire and provided the model for state-organisation for every other ruler (1922a : 25 ; 1937 : 164).

These Hindu states were not merely "tax-exacting or tribute-collecting corporations", enveloped in an unchanging system of customs, as indologists like Henry Maine were wont to believe. The conscious and "positive" will of the state (*rājnām ājnā*) or actual laws enforced by "sanction" which could be and were "modified and revised" by the Hindu kings and statesmen, as is evidenced in inscriptions were an important feature of them (1922a : 74). "The fact that the rates of assessment on land which obtained in Maurya and Chola India are entirely different from the conventional 1/6th of the produce idealized in the śāstras is but one of the many instances of discrepancy between custom and actual law" often found in many Hindu states (ibid. : 80-81). Justice was ensured through a certain kind of judiciary. The presence of *ubbahika* or an ancient counterpart of modern jury system was one of its interesting features.

Many a time the power of the kings or emperors was briddled by their ministers or councils of ministers and as well as by the idea of their obligation to render service to the people. Election and deposition of kings were referred to in the Nitisastras and epics. And, the stories of deposition of Brihadratha, the last Maurya emperor (B. C. 191-185), and of founding the Sisu-Naga dynasty (B. C. 602) after the removal of the reigning king, Nagadasak, were according to Sarkar, two "historic instances" of the phenomena (ibid. : 84). The multiplicity of srenis or economic associations of Indian peasants, artisans and merchants—the "real group-persons" of Gierke and Figgis' or "groupes professionnels" of Durkheim—with their distinctive rights and obligations and immunities farther limited the power of the ruler of the kingdom (1921 : 57 & 98 ; 1937 : 227). Of course, the centralizing exploits of successful empire builders" circumscribed the autonomy of the Srenis. The Maurya period saw pro-

bably the (1) *Pugas* or *samghas* or corporations of men (i) belonging to different social grous (nana-jatiyah), (ii) practising diverse professions (anitya-vrittayah) and (iii) having a preponderance of economic or secular interests (artha-kama-pradhanah); (2) *vrata* of *utsedha-jivinah* (or people of "the profession of blackmailing, brigandage as a regular means of livelihood"); (3) the *ayudha-jivi-samgha* (associations of men who "lived by the profession of arms") (4) the *sreni* (or the guilds), (5) the *raja* (the rulers by profession), and (6) the *vihara* (monastery or church) (1937 : 136-138). The *Arthashastra's* references to these collectivities expose the utter hollowness of the "scepticism among the Eur-American scholars [like Smith] even as to the capacity of the Hindus for organized activity and institutional achievements" (1922a : 30). Among the *samuhas*, the *viharas* had definite rules and regulations regarding election, quorum, voting and business procedure as are attested by *Mahavagga* (ix, ii, 1, 4, iii, 2) and *Chulla-vagga* (iv, xiv, 24, 26, iv, x). These religious bodies and the secular sphere, as in the west, mutually influenced each other,

Finally, the rural communes of India "have lived on till modern times, enjoying greater or less autonomy according to the degree of centralization achieved by the rulers of successive ages" (1921 : 56). Sarkar, unlike many other historians of his time, did not wax eloquent on the virtues of these little republics since they appeared to him to be "a 'survival' in mediaeval times of the more primitive folk institutions of Vedic and republican India" (1922a : 55). Then, epigraphic evidence, scanty though it was, suggested that the real self-sufficiency and genuine autonomy of rural swa-rajas must have been prominent by their absence during the ascendancy of sarva-bhaumas" (1922a : 59). At the same time the territory and other natural hindrances defined the limits of the central and imperial authority and often led to centrifugal disruption. "It is not a special vice of the Orient, as has been alleged, that the empires were ephemeral and that the kingdoms were in a 'state of nature'" (1921(26) : 61). A consolidated empire worth

the name with a far flung and well coordinated administrative system "could not be a normal phenomenon anywhere on earth before the era of steam and the industrial revolution. It is this fundamental influence of physics on politics, that...forced the ancient and mediaeval empires of the world to remain but ... loose conglomerations of almost independent nationalities" ... (*idem*). Sarkar added, " 'Regional independence' was thus the very life and core of that system in Asia, as in Europe" (*idem*). The provincial governors, the *markgrafen*, the local chiefs, and the aldermen of rural communes were born and nurtured in that atmosphere of autonomy.

It would seem absurd that such long-continuing, far-sweeping and extremely diverse political processes should produce no political thought. Indeed, as opposed to the picture presented by Max Müller and his compeers, Sanskrit literature is, Sarkar pointed out, "the literature of every human activity from cooking, dancing, painting, cattle-breeding, gardening and grooming to erotics, thieving, burglary, warfare, navigation and manufacture of military implements. Needless to observe, political and socio-legal treatises occupy a great deal of space" (1918 : 488). He culled from this literature the elements of a political theory of the Hindus. His summation, rather, reconstruction, of the leading doctrines of Hindu political thought has since been seriously debated. There are scholars like Varma, whose work (1959) is at variance with Sarkar's interpretation of Hindu political speculations on almost every significant point, as well as those like Sarma (1959), Saletore (1963), Spellman (1964) who only partially agree with Sarkar in certain important areas. But the scholars studying the political thought and institutions of ancient India can hardly ignore Sarkar's views on them. As his interpretation of the Hindu political thought very directly reflects his understanding of the nature of the (Hindu) society in ancient India and its values, a brief account of the same will be presented in a subsequent chapter (ch. V) which deals directly with Sarkar's ideas on the Hindu society.

Meanwhile, it may be noted that either in his description of the political institutions of the Hindus or in his analysis of the political institutions, Sarkar's comparative approach suffered from a certain angularity and he himself failed to scrupulously keep to the norms he himself prescribed. If he did not make an all-out effort to prove the superiority of the character or political acumen of the Hindus to that of, say, the Greeks or Romans, he was, be it repeated here, peculiarly anxious to disprove any charge or allegation of inferiority or incompetence for managing worldly affairs that might be hurled against the former. As a result, he searched only the replica or doubles of the features of the western life in the eastern (or, more specifically the Indian) socio-cultural system. If, at any time, any discrepancy were found, it would rather prove the excellence of the Asian (or Indian) culture (cf. Sarkar, 1922, 1937 : *passim*) in comparison with its western counterpart. At this point Basham's remarks are worth perusing : “..the civilization of pre-Muslim India was an ancient one, and parallels with the Europe of the last three centuries can never be wholly accurate. It is probably more fruitful to compare Hindu India with those cultures of the remoter past which were her contemporaries. But there, too, differences are evident as well as similarities” (Basham, 1964. vii). Sarkar underplayed the differences. He referred, of course, more than once, to differences in epochs, though this reference did not stand in the way of his eading, on occasions, the elements of a modern mind in the thoughts of the people of India of the distant past. The spatial differences too, had, according to him, differential impact on the cultures of different peoples. The differences were not so overriding as to obliterate the basic uniformities of human nature, which Sarkar was at great pains to prove in his fight against the generally shared idea among the western people regarding the inherent differences of the Asian and Western characters and the resultant inability of the former to catch up with the advances made by the latter in recent times. Sarkar admitted that “*Difference in characteristics may surely be*

proved to exist between people and people in quantity, variety and quality..." (1922 : 107 ; emphasis added). But "they are not," he hastened to add, "such as to constitute the basis for radical race-distinctions. The different nations do not represent permanent divergences in *Weltanschauung* or outlook on the universe" (*idem*).

The idea of similarities of human minds became a dogma with Sarkar, which coloured his analysis and presentation of the polity, society, and culture in ancient India. Sarkar himself was a great apostle of the creativity of human mind. But he was caught in self-contradiction when he ignored or undermined the novelties in cultures of diverse peoples, which were but expressions of the creative urges of men. Had he been alive to the problem just mentioned, he would have probably taken pains for highlighting and explaining the differences which the Hindus of the remote past had from their contemporaries in other cultures to furnish a fuller understanding of the ancient Indian political culture than what his audience gained from him. The awareness, it seems, never dawned in him since his only purpose was, it may be reiterated, to provide his countrymen with facts of a particular variety from the womb of the past, i.e., those facts which would instill in them the confidence that they did and can at present as well as in future accomplish the same kinds of things as the other races were and are capable of. Knowledge of the past is, according to Sarkar, useful only to the extent it succeeds in leading the present and succeeding generations on to action. What he seemed to have missed was that knowledge based on an incomplete cognition of facts is only partially helpful.

"Knowledge is", declared Sarkar, "capture, conquest, possession, an intimate enjoyment of nature's secrets and mankind's glories" (1922 : 80). "Knowing and understanding are not however", he immediately added, "passive receiving, they involve reacting and reconstructing as well. For, knowledge is a function of life ; it is a process in utilization, i.e., creation of values. This doctrine of life as self-assertion is

Young India's distinctive contribution" (*ibid.* : 82). One cannot claim that one knows or understands a thing as long as one is not in a position to exploit and transform it for one's own ends. Judged by this pragmatist criterion, India's achievements in various branches of knowledge in the modern world did not appear to Sarkar to be impressive in terms of either quality or number. One might talk of one J. C. Bose or P. C. Roy. But, one swallow does not make a summer. One of the principal causes of India's backwardness was obviously the late entry of India into the arena of modern science and technology. Another and an equally important reason explaining the lag was that "India has submitted to the hegemony of a foreign tongue" (*ibid* : 80). India lacked in self-consciousness and independent outlook which could enable India to see the world outside with her own eyes and to grasp and utilize the forces that were continually developing there thanks to manifold creative activities of diverse races on earth.

The abject dependence of the Indians on English as the means of acquiring knowledge, their ignorance of other European languages like French, German or Russian or the languages of other Asian countries and their inability or lack of opportunity to translate the works in different areas of knowledge, available in these languages, into vernaculars led to their intellectual impoverishment and their ignorance of the developments in different countries of Europe and also of Asia. And these European and Asian countries too remained uninformed of the ideas and events in India to the extent the same were projected through English language. Sarkar wondered how the Indians perpetuated the thraldom of a foreign language and an educational system introduced and nurtured by the foreign rulers to serve their interests, when the glowing example of the Japanese was here.

"The world has", observed Sarkar, "a right to say : 'You Indians were forced to learn English virtually, if not ostensibly, at the point of the bayonet. Your Rammohan Roys had no alternative before them but found English Colleges Thus

came to be adopted the ways and means of making a foreign domination over you easy and perhaps permanent. Incidentally, of course, you have been able to assimilate something of the modern spirit owing to the education you have received in your English schools. And you have also been able to show a little sign of rejuvenation during the last three generations by literary, scientific or journalistic activity. But all these marks of new life in India manifest themselves chiefly in English and are to that extent some of the phases of Great Britain's colonial culture. Altogether they indicate your own weakness and strength of your alien master by whose administration and educational system you have been introduced to the larger world' " (*ibid.* : 83-84). Undoubtedly India would have to "demonstrate before the bar of civilised humanity that like the people of Japan she has the virility in her to make use of western civilisation, or for that matter, the institutions and ideals of modern life, without the compulsion...from a western rule. For, a race that is alive and wishes to remain alive would know how to seek the best allies of its life and power from here and there and everywhere" (*ibid.* : 84). The Indians must, therefore, first, master different foreign languages, grasp the discoveries and inventions in various sciences and other branches of knowledge which might be available in these languages and translate the new information in vernaculars. And, they in their turn must make their achievements known to the world outside in different foreign languages. It would pave the way for unhindered development of the creative genius of India. Young India would, Sarkar fervently hoped, prove to be an honourable peer of the nations that were advanced in sciences and other branches of knowledge. While she would receive the ideas of others, she must in her turn be in a position to enrich the others in the world with her contribution. And the cultivation of knowledge in vernaculars and the development and enrichment of vernaculars would facilitate the same.

Sarkar's mind swung alternately from hope to despair and from despair to hope while he examined the contribution of

Young India in different disciplines. For example, Jadu Nath Sarkar's investigations in Moghul-Maratha India were hailed by him as an act of imagination and as a silent protest against the obsession of scholars with the ancient Hindu culture. The diversity in historical researches, that derived inspiration from Asutosh Mukherjee, demonstrated that "history or sociology today is not the monopoly of the Sanskritists, Arabists, or Pali and Persian scholars" (*ibid.* : 298). The evidence from Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, Bengali and "other living languages" came to be considered very valuable in enquiries into the problems of history. The liberalization of mind was manifest also in the curiosity of the Indians in experimental psychology, anthropology, the epochal evolution of fine arts, in the new art forms, in "the inventions and manufactures to which the technical genius of Young India has given birth" (*ibid.* : 299).

Sarkar noted with satisfaction that, particularly, in archaeology or the study of antiquities and positive sciences Young India's achievements earned respect from the European and American observers. The noteworthy feature of the endeavour of the scholars in these fields was twofold. "First, Young India has begun consciously to contribute to the conquest of new realms in each of these sciences by original investigations of the first rate.....Secondly, and what is possibly of greater significance so far as India's national evolution is concerned, these pioneering investigations are not confined to one or two giants or...demi-gods...but are broad-based on the...persistent activity of a daily increasing number of seekers of truth. It is this new democracy of Indian cooperative research" which should be considered a potent force in the progress of science in the world (*ibid.* : 327).

Judged by the twofold test mentioned above, the "intellectual inventory" of the Indians in the field of philosophy appeared to Sarkar to be lamentably poor (*iacm*). The Indian scholars presented quite a few translations, in English or vernaculars, of the *upanishads* or the *darshanas*, the *Gita*,

and so forth or some commentaries on them. But these proved to be of an antiquarian significance only and hardly had any significance for the modern period. "We could hardly mention one great Hindu or Mussalman name in the last three generations of scholarship that is associated *in a creative way* with any of the schools and problems of psychology, theory of knowledge, or methodology" (*ibid.* : 328). The Indian intellect was, in Sarkar's judgment, "absolutely bankrupt" in the realm of higher philosophical speculation, "although the *exploitation of ancient mysticism for current politics* is a palpably noticeable feature of the times" (*idem*, emphasis added).

The scene in the field of historical studies too did not appear to Sarkar at all bright. Though he earlier appriciated the new ventures like those of Jadu Nath Sarkar or the scholars salvaging history from the vernacular literature (*ibid.* : 298), a few moments later he despaired of the originality, boldness and competence of the Indian students of history. "In historical fields the brain of India is" said he, "as barren as in the philosophical. The world has a right to demand that Indian scholars should be competent enough to attack the problems of Latin American, Russian, Italian, or Japanese histoty with as great enthusiasm as Western students employ in the study of Oriental lore. Indians must get used to discussing Europe and America with as much confidence as Europeans and Americans in lecturing and writing on Asia. Not until such an all-grasping world view, a bold man-to-man individualistic understanding of things, a self-conscious attitude in regard to the events of human world, an humanistic approach to the problems of race-development is ingrained in the mentality can one expect to see a real historical school grow up in Young India's intellectual *milieu*" (*ibid.* : 328).

Sarkar's criticism of the solipsism of the Indian historical scholarship in his times was prompted, in the first place, by his intense nationalism. His prognosis of the recovery of the Indian historical studies from timidity and dependency has since then continued to be shared by the scholars of later

times, though the aspirations voiced by him remain unfulfilled even today. For instance, Tripathi demonstrates, in his Presidential Address to Section Four of the Indian Historical Congress, 1983, the inadequacy of the "monocentric approach" to historical inquiry and avers, in the spirit of Sarkar (op. cit. 328 & 330), that a comprehensive vision of Indian historical reality would require a deep insight into the historical experience of other peoples (Tripathi, 1983 : 3-11). He deplores, at the same time (as if echoing Sarkar), that the number of significant works by the Indian historians "is woefully small. It is also painfully plain to even a casual observer that no Indian scholar has yet won for himself a place in non-India historiography comparable or anywhere close to that occupied by a multitude of foreign scholars in the historiography of our country. If Australia, Britain, Soviet Union, and the United States, to name only a few of the countries, can produce scholars whose contribution to Indian history is widely recognised in this country, there is no reason why Indian scholars cannot carve out a niche for themselves among the historians of the countries to which they are academically linked. I would have satisfied myself with the false consolation that the colonial syndrome is responsible for this state of affairs, if there were evidences to contrary. Seventeen years ago [when the Indian History Congress opened the Non-Indian Section] Professor [G.K.] Mookerjee had envisioned that the students of other countries would soon be coming to learn their own respective histories at the feet of Indian masters ; we are not a day nearer his dream" (Tripathi, 1983 : 16), or, one may say, the dream of Sarkar.

Judged by the international standard as indicated above, the state of political science wore a pitiable look in Sarkar's times. "But probably the weakest item in the present state of Indian intellect, especially that of the Bengali *intelligentsia* is a weaknead cowardice before facts and figures of the economic world" (Sarkar, op. cit. 329). To overcome the deficiency, the Indian social scientists should, suggested Sarkar, go to foreign countries to examine their political and economic

ideas, institutions and problems *in situ*. A thorough familiarity with non-Indian or extra-Indian questions and a skilful handling of such data were the essential prerequisite for the development of "an authoritative body of economic and political doctrines in India" (*ibid.* : 330). Similarly, continuous interaction with foreign savants and intimate acquaintance with their ideas and methods would enable the Indian students in philosophy and history "to watch from month to month how and why a particular problem of epistemology or animal behaviour or soul-psychology acquires prominences in philosophical discussions, and observe how the interpretation of one's country's immediate past has been changing with decades according to the shibboleths of science, sect, or social denomination that happen to be in the ascendant for the time being" (*idem*). The Indian students must have such an intimate experience of "the inner workings of the philosophical and historical mind" before they could attempt "cultural reconstruction" in Young India.

A discerning reader may or may not read in the lines above some rudiments of sociology of knowledge but what he cannot miss there is Sarkar's deep concern with the proper methodology in social sciences. "For Indian intellectuals the urgent desideratum of the hour is," Sarkar pointed out in early twenties, "a purely objective methodology. The instrument of a thoroughly realistic and unsentimental approach to the facts and phenomena of the psychical and social world has to be made quite popular in India. *In order to achieve this viewpoint the preliminary procedure should be to acquire altogether new angles of vision, and this would be feasible only if a good few of the scholars got interested in studies and investigations that have absolutely no Indian bearing.* In other words, we have to proceed to the historical, philosophical, economic and political studies exactly in the spirit in which the archaeologists or rather the students of positive science have been attacking their problems" (*idem*; emphases added). The preceding lines bear an unmistakable evidence of Sarkar's commitment to the positivist method in social sciences.

The way advocated by Sarkar in the early twenties for ensuring objectivity in studies in social sciences by the Indian students tallies, interestingly enough, with the recommendation by Srinivas in the following observation. "Some would argue that all understanding of another society is necessarily comparative, in as much as an anthropologist understands the society he is studying only by comparing and contrasting it with his own society, even though this comparison is never verbalized. When an anthropologist has made a field-study of a community, he has two communities to fall back upon, the one into which he is born and the other which he has studied. Gradually, as his acquaintance...with other societies increases, his approach becomes more truly comparative. *Without this, he fails to have sufficient detachment from his own society, or from the one in which he has carried out his fieldwork*" (Srinivas, 1962 : 138 ; emphasis added).

The foregoing discussion amply illustrates Sarkar's involvement in developing the methodology of social sciences in this country. Maybe, he did not always succeed in delineating definite rules for studying historical phenomena or socio-cultural events and movements because of his wavering between an appreciation of the need for recognising the specificities of societies and cultures in history and the urge he felt for demonstrating generalisations about societies across time and space, or more precisely, the uniformities between the east and the west. But the fact does not reduce the importance of *Sarkar as a pioneer in methodological discourses in social science parlour in this country.*

Sarkar hailed the slow but steady development of a new branch of studies, i. e., the one relating to the fine arts, especially to paintings and sculpture though the signs of originality had been lacking and the science of aesthetics had not advanced in India of his times in the same proportions as the creative experiments in the art world. He pointed out that "philology, anthropology and sociology are the three sciences that have long been awaiting a wide recognition among Indian scholars" (1922 : 331).

Though a few Indian students of philology had their training abroad and the Indian scholars had the knowledge of different Indo-Aryan languages and could compare the grammars of Greek, Latin, Sanskrit (and Persian), French and German, the comparative study of several non-Aryan languages, say, Chinese and Arabic, together with that of Aryan groups was yet to start. “A school of philology worth the name cannot evolve in India unless the Sanskritist (and Persianist) possesses command also over Arabic and Chinese, or the Arabist can handle with ease the Chinese and Sanskrit (and Persian) languages. Sanskrit, Arabic, and Chinese, this *trio* must have to be treated as an inseparable group by the rising linguists of India” (*ibid.* : 331). The social value of this “scientific *trivium* could hardly be overestimated. The Hindu-Moslem unity of which we hear so much these days can be founded only on such a synthetic ground-work of conscious cultural *rapprochement*. Sanskrit-knowing Hindus must have to learn Arabic and Arabic-knowing Mussalmans must have to be proficient in Sanskrit. And since Chinese is partly also the language of Islam in the Far East no proper appraisal of Moslem civilization is possible to a student who is unfamiliar with that language” (*idem*). The Hindu University of Benares or the University of Calcutta (where a philologist like A. Suhrawardy worked) should, desired Sarkar, take the initiative in studies of “Moslem Achievements in Mediaeval Culture” or Indo-Islamic philology, which might lead to a new Islamic renaissance.

The work of the folklorists and collectors of legends and manuscripts, associated with *Sahitya Parishats* and *Sammelans* (literary academies and conferences), during the first quarter of the twentieth century had, noted Sarkar, an important bearing on the development of anthropology in this country. Also, the merit of one or two publications by Indian ethnologists was recognised by the scholars abroad. “But on the whole the scientific study of anthropology cannot be said to have begun in India” (*ibid.* : 332). Even in the second decade of the century the subject did not get official

recognition from the Indian Universities. "But time has come," wrote Sarkar in 1922, "when the under graduates should be taught to regard the investigations into the life and institutions of the Africans, American-Indians and the aboriginal tribes of India, Australia and the Polynesian Islands as an integral part of "general culture". For the impact of anthropological researches on the approach to the problems of the human *psyche*, morals, religion, criminology, social behaviour, and inter-racial justice, in one word, on the entire science of civilization has been nothing short of revolutionary" (*idem*).

Sociology too was not given a place as an independent discipline or "science" in the course of instruction by the Indian universities in general. But the "very fact that in India today there are at least one hundred propagandas from Andhra library movement and Malabar women's association to temperance-conference and depressed classes mission.. should challenge the authorities of higher learning to create opportunities for the scientific study not only of Indian institutions and *mores* but of all facts and theories bearing on social progress, social inheritance, social control and social service" (*idem*). And, Sarkar tried in his own way to further the advancement of the said scientific i. e., sociological studies in this country. He envisioned a Calcutta school of sociology. So far an attempt has been made to give an idea of his understanding of the nature of the discipline, the issues to be examined and methods to be followed there, and also of his efforts towards the development of the subject. More about the same in the chapter that follows.

CHAPTER IV

EXPLORING SOCIOLOGY (I)

To specify the floor and ceiling of sociology has always been a difficult task. It was more so in earlier days. The ramparts of sociology oftentimes appear to be indeterminate since the science of society is expected to deal with almost any phenomenon that may occur in society. Different sociologists have tried to delimit the arena of sociology in different ways with varying degrees of success. It would be interesting for those who may engage in tracing the lines of development of the discipline in this country to examine how Benoy Kumar Sarkar, a pioneer in Sociology in India, tried to grapple with the problem.

A reader of the first volume of the *Positive Background of Hindu Sociology* (vol. I) (1924) may feel bewildered with the plethora of data on ancient Indian Geography, Ethnology, Mineralogy, Botany, Zoology and Hindu Physiology, Biology, Mechanics, Acoustics, etc. The major portion of the work is devoted to the aforementioned subjects and one may wonder as to why they should occupy the overwhelming bulk of a treatise on sociology. Sarkar himself sought to provide an answer to the puzzle. First, he described sociology as an "Architectonic" science and, secondly, he considered P.B.H.S. to be a prelude to *Sukraniti* which he regarded as an important "Sanskrit work on Sociology" (1914a : ix).

Sarkar tried to defend his view through a comparison of Sukra with Montesquieu. He cited the following remark of Edward Dowden (in his *History of French Literature*) about Montesquieu : "The scientific researches of his day attracted him ; investigating anatomy, botany, natural philosophy, the history of the earth, he came to see man as a portion of nature, or at least as a creature whose life is largely determined by natural laws.....Nothing, however, interested him so much as the phenomena of human society. He had no

aptitude for metaphysical speculations : his feeling for art and literature was defective" (cited in Sarkar, 1914a : 60). And, Sarkar immediately observed, "Exactly the same character-sketch would apply to the Hindu sociologist SukracharyyaThe same non-metaphysical and pre-eminently human outlook, the same positive and scientific standpoint, the same comprehensiveness and encyclopaedic conception, the same aversion to literary and artistic flourish mark the intellectual framework of the authors of the *Sukra cycle*." (1914a : 60).

Both *Espirit des Lois* of Montesquieu and the *Sukraniti* lacked the unity of a ruling idea, suffered from the deficiency in construction, in continuity and cohesion. The shortcomings remained probably because the minds of the authors were many-sided. But Montesquieu and Sukra had similar points of strength also. Montesquieu "led men to feel the greatness of the social institution" (Dowden cited in Sarkar, op. cit., : 60). *Sukraniti* also proposed for itself the function of prescribing rules for the promotion of human welfare, and the advancement of the interests of both commoners and kings. "The explanation of this strength as well as weakness of the work [i.e., *Sukraniti*] is", observed Sarkar, "to be sought in its very scope and province, wh. h ...ie those of the 'science of all sciences', the 'architectonic' or the dominant science, as Aristotle would call it. *Sukraniti*, as such a master-science, in order to fulfil its mission as a guide-philosopher-friend to every class of human beings, must survey the whole universe from the planet to the sea-gull, and the daffodil to the star". And in the same breath Sarkar added, "All the facts and phenomena of the mineral, vegetable and animal worlds have bearings on human life and social progress. Professors of the 'architectonic' science, therefore, have need of them" (1914a : 61).

Sarkar appreciated the benefit of specialisation in the study of social and physical phenomena. But the progress of sciences in the acquisition of mathematical accuracy "has", Sarkar deplored, "necessarily deprived them of their realistic and concrete character" (ibid. : 62). The limitations of

specialised sciences "in the framing of practical rules or duties of life" are frankly admitted by the scholars of today. And since the science or sciences of society cannot avoid the task of providing solutions to practical problems of life, they can hardly ignore the example of *Sukraniti* wherein the emphasis on comprehensiveness is unmistakable.

Two important features of this conception of sociology or science of society are : (1) Sociology will have the problem-solving capacity, and (2) it will, therefore, examine specific problems in relation to a great variety of other phenomena with which they are interconnected. The only trouble with this idea of the mode and province of sociology is that over-emphasis on comprehensiveness may endlessly extend the horizons of sociology almost to the point of their complete obliteration. And Sarkar could never, it appears, get over the trouble.

One obvious reason behind Sarkar's elaborate presentation of the data on mineralogy, botany, zoology or other natural sciences was to give the readers some idea of the natural civilisation of the Hindus.

Sarkar's elaborate treatment of mineralogy and metallurgy of the Hindus and their use of precious metals and stones adroitly brought out many important truths like the following one about the Hindus of the yore : "They are sane men dealing with the world as it is, and have to reckon with the human passions as they are. They therefore do not taboo wealth and enjoyments from their scheme of life, but try to regulate them as far necessary" (*ibid.* : 80). But his discursive treatment of the vast welter of facts of a most varied nature may make it difficult for the reader to discover such important truths about the Indian society and culture.

The problem emanated perhaps from Sarkar's bewilderment with what he described as "the hodge-podge like character of sociology" (1937 : 650). It is difficult to explain this perplexity in a scholar who was acutely aware of that sociology lay at the interstices of different branches of knowledge since each and every phenomenon of society has an interstitial character.

If the sidelines of sociology appeared to Sarkar to have a shifting character (*ibid.* : 651), it was all the more a reason why he should have applied greater rigors in depicting the boundaries and methods of sociology. He did not do that. In his interesting narrative of the development of sociology in India (1937 : 650-659), Sarkar observed that many intellectuals in India carried out important studies about the nature of Indian society and culture. They were "genuine sociologists" (*ibid.* : 651). "In the India of those days students of history, philosophy, psychology, ethics, Metaphysics, law, marriage, property, aesthetics, myths, civilization, literature, and what not were...dealing with sociology or rather its *data* in a more or less unconscious manner. Those were, however, primitive conditions,—a state of things in which sociology was not yet differentiated in category or content from the sister disciplines" (*idem*; emphases added). Did sociology in India mature from these "primitive conditions" or pre-sociology or proto-sociology stage to a more developed and defined branch of knowledge in 1917 when "the category 'sociology' officially invaded the academic atmosphere in Calcutta and it came to stay" (*ibid.* : 653)? One would hardly get any answer from Sarkar.

Even two decades after 1917 Sarkar did not find any need to distinguish between social thought and sociology (cf. Sarkar 1937 a). Modern sociology rests, however, upon a fairly clear distinction "between social thought—the history of which is co-terminous with the history of humanity—and sociological analysis" (Bottomore and Nisbet, 1979 : viii). Sociological analysis is a systematic form of inquiry with a distinctive, though varied, array of concepts and methods of research into the nature of social reality. Social thought is more generic than sociological endeavour and may contain any kind of speculation about society. It is rather a break in social thought, rightly observed Bottomore and Nisbet, which produced sociology and it was certainly the product of many influences, "but one of its most important features was undoubtedly the new and more precise conception of

'society' as an object of study, clearly distinguished from the state and political regime in general, as well from a vague universal history of mankind and from the particular histories of 'peoples', 'states' or 'civilisations'. The idea of 'society' was elaborated in analysis of social structure, social systems and social institutions which formed the central core of sociological theory at least from Marx onward.....and all the diverse schools of thought are so many attempts to define the elements of social structure..." (*idem*).

Maybe, Sarkar's perpetual fear of constriction of individual freedom by society or collectivity of any from stood in the way of an adequate emphasis by him on the analysis of the nature of society or social structure and the specific method of doing it. His overenthusiasm, on the other hand, over "injecting into the *milieu* of modern sociological discipline strong doses of the historic sense and Asian data as well as genuine comparative methodology" (Sarkar, 1937 : 654) led to his failure in drawing the lines between history and sociology and between social thought and sociological inquiry. Sarkar completely ignored in the second edition of PBHS (1937a) the notes of caution he himself uttered in the earlier edition of the work against the treatment of treatises like Manu Samhita as sociological literature (1921 : 161, 163, 169, 171, 173). The fact becomes intriguing particularly in view of Sarkar's increasing familiarity over the years (between 1914 and 1937) with the works of the masters of sociological thought in the west. He was one of the pioneers in Indian sociology who offered a critique of the contributions of the European masters in sociology and their American collaborators.

II

Since Benoy Kumar Sarkar grew up in the ambience of positivism (sup. ch. II. s. VI), it was quite natural that Auguste Comte and his positivism would influence his ideas. Sarkar's reaction to the ideas of this master of sociological thought was not, of course, one of enchantment and unmixed admiration. The word, "positivism", was borrowed by him from

Comte to describe the values and ways of life of the Hindus of the past. But he did not accept the entire gamut of meaning of the term as understood by Comte and he gave reasons for his rejection of parts of Comte's ideas.

It appeared interesting to Sarkar that the category of sociology came to be recognised for the first time only in 1842, with Comte's invention of the term, though "all the eponymous heroes of mankind" have contributed since time immemorial to the development of multiform social institutions and the vast body of theories" about them. And it was unintelligible to him why Comte, and not Herder, should be considered the starting point of modern sociology. The coinage of the word, Sociology, does not constitute a dominant title to the fathering of a science (1941 : 518). The enormous changes in the nature and province of sociology since the days of Comte made the affinity between the Comtean system and modern sociology very weak and feeble, the latter became qualitatively different from the former.

If Comte, Spencer and Schäffle were mentioned as "classical sociologists", the practitioners of the science in the days of Sarkar should, he thought, be described as professors of a "New Sociology". The thinkers of the first group belonged to 'what the Italian sociologist Carli in *Le Teorie Sociologiche* calls the historico-encyclopaedic school' (1936 : 4). They attempted at explaining history, tracing the processes of evolution and offered suggestions also regarding the future lines of advance. On the other hand, the founders of "New Sociology", viz., Tonnies, Tarde, Durkheim and Simmel, were interested in the analysis of "forces, processes, groups and relations" (*idem*). The American and British sociologists like Shaw, Giddings, Ross, Wallas McDougall, Cooley, Ellwood also belonged to "this class which is generally known as the school of 'analytical' or 'formal' sociology. The first or the classical type may also be aptly described as culture-sociology" (*ibid.* : 5). Though Sarkar's description of all the important sociologists after Comte, Spencer, and Schäffle under the rubric of analytical or formal school is untenable,

his overall assessment of Comte's position in modern sociology is not totally incorrect.

Comte was, according to Sarkar, just a "poly-historian" like many other poly-historians of the period from 1750 to 1850. He dealt with world history, "the history not so much of facts as of ideas, sciences, and cultures. The *liaison* between the historical philosophy, culture-history or philosophical history of Comte and sociological science of today which seeks to specialize in s ociation, social processes, social forms and inter-relations between the processes and/or forms is very thin" (1941 : 518). Again, what kind of historical analysis was it ? Comte's analysis of the mental stages in evolution or the ages of human mind is not substantiated by facts or logic. It is not possible to demonstrate any stage which is characterized by the exclusive reign of imagination, or experience or reason respectively. "Nor is it demonstrable anthropologically or psychologically that imagination belongs to the primitive mind and precedes ratiocination or concrete experience" (1936 : 2). Then, Sarkar agreed with René Worms that Comte's intellectual or scientific interpretation of history was as one sided and, therefore, as fallacious as the "economic interpretation" of history by Marx. Further, Comte was viewed by Sarkar to be a finalist like Hegel and Marx.

Hegel and Marx respectively advanced a theory of Progress which postulated, according to Sarkar, the last stage of perfectibility, which was farthest removed from Sarkar's idea of ever-continuing progress of the human race. "Nor is Comte's position acceptable. His three stages as indicated in *Cours de Philosophie Positive* (1830-42) are, after all, Hegelian in form, although not in dialectic. And his third stage,—positivism,—is, as he believes, the ultimate condition of human intelligence and human bliss" (1941 : 520). Comte believed like Hegel that the last or highest, "—his positive stage,—has already arrived. Comtism is finalism alleged to be factually achieved by mankind" (*idem*).

Sarkar recognised, of course, Comte as an intellectual leader of the nineteenth century whose *Le Système de Politique*

Positive was an epoch-making work. Comte's essay was published when he was only 24 years old and Sarkar found in this event a concrete example of his thesis that the creative energy and vision belongs mainly to the youth whose function in history has been to "demolish the region, the *milieu*, the society, the tradition, and the epoch" (*ibid.* : 651).

Then, Sarkar noticed an affinity between Manu's ideas of Mahu-yajnas and Rinas and the notion of *Dette Sociale* in French thought from Comte to Bouglé. Certain aspects of "modern French philosophy of solidarism" were found by him to be ideologically connected with the old Hindu doctrines of *yagna* and *rina*. "And this linking is perhaps due to the direct drawing by Celstin Bouglé (1870-1940) upon the Hindu sources" (*ibid.* : 364).

The idea of reciprocal relations between individuals constitutes the foundation of Bouglé's solidaristic philosophy. This positive fact of reciprocity or interdependence of individuals underlay the categories of "quasi-contract" and social "debt" in Bouglé's *Le Solidarisme*. And Bouglé might have, surmised Sarkar, derived the idea of social debt in the milieu of his Indological studies in connection with *Essais sur le régime des castes* (Paris, 1908).

"The idea of *rina* or debt is", Sarkar pointed out, "the most characteristic contribution of Hindu social philosophy. It is no less prominent in the atmosphere than the doctrine of duty or quasi-debt in the analysis of *yajnas*. The sacrifices, duties and debts constitute one socio-moral complex in the Hindu pattern. It is as a born debtor to Nature, man and the world that the householder is taught to behave every day. The round of daily duties prescribed for him is calculated virtually to render him an embodiment of *solidarisme social*" (*ibid.* : 364).

Sarkar was, as the paragraph above shows, perspicacious enough to discover the meaning of the *yajnas*, *rinas*, and *acharas* of the Hindus, the fundamental value system underlying them. But his craze for finding an analogy or replica of every element of Hindu culture and society in the occiden-

tal systems made him give up the task of highlighting the specificity of the Hindu culture and digress, rather, dabble, in demonstrating its similarities with other cultures. The prevalence in France of the Hindu doctrine of *rina* as social debt could be, he showed, traced back to the authorities older than Bouglé. In *La Solidarité* (Paris 1932, chapter VI, pp 19, 109-122, 137) Charles Gide (1847-1932), the exponent of cooperation, enunciated the theory of quasi-contract in the context of solidarity, or solidarism as *dette sociale*. Gide recorded the origin of the phrase with Gambetta, the statesman, who had used it in the course of a speech in April 1870. ‘Comte is likewise quoted by Gide as saying, ‘*Nous naissions chargés d’obligations de toutes sortes envers la société*, (We are born burdened with debts of all sorts to the society)” (ibid. : 365 . The statement is “almost a literal translation of a vedic passage”, i.e., an enunciation in the *Taittiriya Samhita* (VI, iii, 10, 5) which runs as follows : *Jayamano vai brahmaṇastrībhīr rinava jayate* (i.e., As soon as a Brahman is born he is indebted in three ways, namely, (1)* to the *devas* (gods), the *rishis* (sages) and (3) the *pitrīs* (ancestors) ; cited and explained in Saikar, 1941 : 361 and 365). In a similar vein Le'on Bourgeois, a leader of the radical-socialist party, too observed that everybody is at birth saddled with a debt towards the society (*tout homme en naissant est gravé : d’une dette vis-à-vis de la société*). The debt is to be paid by the privileged (*les privilégiés de la naissance*) in society to the disinherited (*déshérités*). Sarkar thus discovered the “self-evident”, “fundamental ideological identities between the ancient Hindu doctrine of *rina* and the modern French theory of *dette sociale* or quasi-contract from Comte to Bouglé. The modernizations introduced by Le'on Bourgeois are no less obvious. Some day it may be possible for orientalists to detect the influences exerted on Comte and Le'on Bourgeois by the Indological researches of *le monde savant français* in the nineteenth century” (ibid. : 366).

The section may be closed most appropriately with the

following succinct statement made by Sarkar about Comte in a footnote to his VTSP : "The word 'positive' in my *Positive Background*, be it noted *en passant*, implies objective, factual, materialistic, secular and worldly, as contrasted with subjective, idealistic, mystical or transcendental. Its ideological associations with Comte are obvious. But I have never accepted Comte's sociology of the three stages. Nor does my use of the category, positive, automatically imply an affiliation with the Comtist religious or moral propaganda, whatever it be. Be it recalled, however, that Comtist positivism and social service was accepted by Bankim Chatterji, as equivalent to Hinduism (*Supra*, pp. 356-359)" (ibid. 661, the f. n. started at 659).

III

If Comte suggested the idea of finality in his vision of the positive stage and was, therefore, unacceptable to Sarkar, the latter noticed with relief that there were students of "modern French sociology" who highlighted the "indefinite and eternal character of creativities, inventions and progress" (1941 : 520). For example, the "ceaseless and continuous series of repetition (imitation)—opposition—adaptation triad is the conclusion of the sociology of Gabriel Tarde (1843-1904)". Sarkar commended Tarde for two reasons. First, there was no 'finality' in Tarde's thesis of creative inventions and assimilative adaptations. Secondly, though Tarde did not seem to attach due importance to opposition (war, competition, and discussion), he stressed the role of individual in progress. And, because of the latter reason, "my sympathies", observed Sarkar, "are more with his sociology than with that of anti-Tardean Durkheim, who is responsible for the 'society-cult'" (ibid. : 521). Sarkar's exclusive attention to individual freedom and enterprise was responsible for his critical, rather, negative, attitude to Durkheim. "In the general psychological controversy about the 'inventive' individual of Gabriel Tarde (1842-1904) vs. the *contrainte* (coercion, control or compulsion) *sociale* of Emile Durkheim (1958-1917) on the questions bear-

ing on personality, creativity and progress my position is in the main that of the former, as often indicated in the present study (i.e. VTSP). The individual selects and rejects" (1941 : 448). One might expect a more balanced view of Durkheim from Sarkar in view of the latter's familiarity with some major works by Durkheim.

Durkheim's prominence in sociology or social philosophy was duly recognised by Sarkar in VTSP. His review of Schäffle's "Bau und Leben des Sozialen Körpers in the *Revue Philosophique* (1889) was deemed to be the first expression of [his] dominant ideas" and an illustration of the fact that youth was the progenitor of original ideas (ibid. : 653-655). Sarkar's aphoristic evaluation of Durkheim's essay was more or less correct. The essay was the first systematic expression of Durkheim's ideas about the nature of society and sociology. In course of this review Durkheim declared, "Sociology has now emerged from the heroic age...Let it establish itself, become organized, draw up its programme and specify its method" (Quoted in Lukes, 1975 : 85). "To these tasks he henceforth applied himself" (Lukes, 1975 : 85). In 1928, Sarkar recorded Durkheim's contribution in the following manner : "1895. Durkheim (1858-1917), *Les regles de la methode sociologique* (Rules of Sociological Method), *De la division du travail social* (Division of social labour). 1893 : Social homogeneity precedes heterogeneity and creates it because of (i) the struggle for existence and (ii) the division of labour. At first there is no individual but a common consciousness, social representations and institutions dominating the individual. He propounds the idea of professional groups or associations. The intensity of punishment increases according as the society is less elevated and as the central power is more absolute. Restraint on personal liberty (i.e., imprisonment) for varying periods according to the gravity of the crime is becoming the normal type of punishment, says he...." (99-100). Sarkar referred to Durkheim's *Contribution to Sociological Theory* (New York, 1915) by Gehlke in connection with this sketchy presentation of the

salient points in Durkheim's thought. He repeatedly and agreeably cited Durkheim's views on professional associations. Nonetheless, he kept on harping on his disagreement with Durkheim's views on the importance of collective life.

Though Sarkar had ever been eager to demonstrate his difference from Durkheim, his ideas on the influence of the *milieu* of an individual on his personality had a striking similarity with those of Durkheim. Criticising the scholars who stressed the transcendental and other-worldly elements in the Hindu culture, he wrote in the Foreword to the first volume of the PBHS, "This mass of metaphysical lore requires, in fact, to be regarded as the 'criticism' as Matthew Arnold would say, of Indian 'life' and its problem and achievements. The transcendental speculation has to be understood and explained with reference to the *milieu* and environment according to the philosophico-comparative methods followed in the Schools of Literary Studies founded by such critics as Taine, Edmond Scherer, Sainte Beuve and Dowden" (1914 a : xiii). In order to tackle the problem of deciding as to whether a Sanskrit treatise like *Sukraniti* was the product of one author, or of a particular age, or whether it reflected at all the real state of affairs or projected merely an ideal state of things and relations he suggested, "The Time-Spirit and the Place-Spirit are too powerful to be ignored by human genius even if it consciously attempt it. The social environment and physical surroundings—both the aspects of the great envelope of man—cannot but leave their marks upon his intellectual consciousness and literary activities of any considerable magnitude..., therefore, ...we propose to investigate all the social and physical influences that are likely to have contributed to the making of *Sukraniti*..." (ibid.: 2-3). The Durkheimean strain in the preceding observations of Sarkar becomes obvious, if they are compared with the French scholar's views on the interaction of the individual and his milieu (cf. sup. 19-20).

In Book II (Part I) of PBHS (1921) Sarkar referred to Durkheim's concept of *groupes professionnels* in his discus-

sions of the *samuhas* (corporate bodies) and *srenis* (corporations) of ancient and mediaeval India. He vehemently opposed the idea that the people of the orient (particularly of ancient and mediaeval India) understood the language of despotic rule only and lacked in the ability and initiative for collective organisation of their efforts. Different types of corporate bodies, samuhas and srenis, which operated in the spheres of religion, production including crafts and 'industry', trade and commerce, secret organisations of revolutionary activities, etc., of the Indians of earlier times were referred to in this connection (Sarkar 1921 : 58 & 96-99). Also, there were *srenis* of musicians or money lenders (the *Sukraniti*). These "oriental semi-sovereign samuhas, i.e. corporate bodies, the group-persons of Gierke, or *groupes professionnels*' of Durkheim" had almost a similar relation with the state as the 'gild merchants' and 'craft gilds' of Medieval Europe with the borough administration of the localities wherein they operated or with the feudal barons, or with the king himself (ibid. : 59)

The *Sukraniti* hinted at a large number of guilds operating in the social and economic sphere. And it explicitly advised the legislator to lay down the principles according to which the disputes arising within and among these "group persons" would be settled. The legislator should, for example, see that no evidence from a person prejudiced against a sreni or varga be entertained in any dispute against it. "Sukra's solicitation for the 'interest groups', the 'groupes professionnels' of Durkheim, is thus quite clear" (ibid. : 98).

Also, Sukra's "conception of the functional organisation of society" led him to plead for the *srenis* a substantial share in the political administration of the state. The state in the *Sukraniti* would thus resolve itself by this process virtually into an association of *imperia in imperio*, i.e., a union of lesser corporations. "Like Althresius, Sukra may then be regarded as an exponent of the decentralized state, embodying the principle of functional *sva-raja* (self-rule)

which...was a fact of medieval Eur-Asian polity and has obtained forceful advocacy over again in recent times, in the theories of Gumplovic̄, Ratzenhofer, Durkheim and Duguit..." (*idem*).

Whether Sarkar was justified in reading the modern ideas about the state and the limitations on centralised state-power in the *Sukraniti* is a different question. But the passages above clearly indicate his awareness of Durkheim's appreciation of the role of professional bodies or guilds as countervailing forces to an omnipotent and omnipresent state. Both Sarka and Durkheim were pluralists.

The French master recognised the role of political society or state in the west in creating the idea of positive rights of the individual and a sphere of freedom unknown to simple societies. At the same time he was alive to the danger that a "society composed of an infinite number of unorganized individuals, that a hypertrophied State is forced to oppress and contain, constitutes a veritable sociological monstrosity. For collective activity is always too complex to be able to be expressed through the single and unique organ of the State. Moreover, the State is too remote from individuals.... Where the State is the only environment in which men can live communal lives, they inevitably lose contact, become detached, and thus society disintegrates" (Durkheim, 1964 : 28). As a remedy against it, Durkheim underlined the role of a vast range of secondary groups, between the state and the individuals, attracting the individuals strongly in their sphere of action and thus into the current of social life. Indeed, as a society expands, the 'formation of secondary groups... is bound to occur, for in a great society there are always particular local or professional interests which tend naturally to bring together those people with whom they are concerned. There we have the very stuff of associations of a special kind, of guilds, of coteries of every variety...' (Durkheim, 1957 : 62).

There is, of course, the risk that each such group, "tightly enclosing the individuals of which it was made up,

would hinder their development" (ibid. : 61) and "will try to swallow up its members" (ibid. : 62), and would ultimately challenge the authority of the State, if there is no power to offset or neutralize its overriding power over its constituents. Herein comes the role of the State. It has, on the one hand, to keep these groups in a balance and, on the other, to defend the rights of the individuals against the groups in its own interest as well as by way of performing its duties towards the citizens. "It will be argued", wrote Durkheim, "might not the State in turn become despotic? Undoubtedly, provided there were nothing to counter that trend.....The inference to be drawn from this comment...is simply that if that collective force, the State, is to be the liberator of the individual, it has itself the need of counter-balance; it must be restrained by other collective forces, that is by those secondary groups.... It is not a good thing for the groups to stand alone, nevertheless they have to exist. And it is out of this conflict of social forces that individual liberties are born (ibid. : 63).

Durkheim's concern with the liberties and rights of the individual is pronounced in his analysis presented above. The failure of Sarkar in properly appreciating and elaborating the idea of "pluralism and decentralisation" in Durkheim's thought appears a bit strange in the context of his initial recognition of the same in Durkheim's views of the role of groupes professionnels vis-a-vis the state when he compared Sukra with the French sociologist. Also in 1928 by way of summarizing the ideas in Bougle's *Le Solidarisme* he observed that the nineteenth century saw the emergences of a new type of individualism which was "positively anti-statal" and was exemplified in the administrative nihilism of Spencer, the anarchistic individualism of Stirner and the "anti-democratic immoralism" of Nietzsche. "It is against this type of individualism that 'solidarism' rises to preach the cult of 'mutual aid', 'social life', 'social dependence', etc. But the dignity of the individual is maintained intact, e.g., in the 'liberalist' thoughts of Taine, Faguet, Buisson

and Durkheim, who, although attaching value to the society and social influences bring the world 'back to individualism'" (Sarkar, 1928 : 166 ; emphasis added). In spite of the foregoing observation, Sarkar repeatedly charged Durkheim with the propagation of "society-cult" or the idea of "domination of sociale contrainte (compulsion or restraint)" over "creative individualism". We read, of course, "To avoid misunderstanding" it requires to be added even at the risk of repetition that creative individualism is by no means opposed to the every item of Marx and Marxism or Durkheim and Durkheimean sociology..." (Sarkar, 1941 : 131). Indeed, a third important area of agreement between Sarkar and Durkheim could easily be discovered in the former's analysis of the "functions" of the *samskaras* and *acharas* of the Hindus.

The Hindu *samskaras* serve, according to Sarkar, (1) to break the monotony of life (ibid. 347), (2) promote "co-operative creativity" (ibid. : 348), (3) ensure "co-operation between men and women on a common platform" (*idem*), and enable "the household to live a somewhat enlarged life" (*idem*) in the midst of invited relatives, and friends who often behave as "actual participants, collaborators and colleagues" (ibid. 349). The ceremonies associated with these *samskaras* afford in the first place, "seasonal and regular chances for *cumaraderi* or reunion with the members of the family, gotra (sib and caste, i.e., those who may be said to constitute the *Gemeinschaft* (community) of Tönnies" (*idem*). Secondly, the village or the town, i.e., the *Siedlungsgesellschaft* of von Wiese, "gets the same chances of mixing itself up in familialistic affairs. The *Gesellschaft* (society) is thus brought into intimate *Beziehung* (relation) with the community" (*idem*). The ten *samskaras* constitute, so to say, a series of interhuman relations nurturing the human personality through the interactions between the individual and the social forces, which have, as if, been planned in a goalful manner.

"The function of the *samskaras* as embodied in each and

every aspect noted above is", wrote Sarkar in a distinctly Durkheimean vein, "fundamentally solidaristic. The individual is perpetually enabled to feel because of the processes involved in the *samskara* pattern that he or she is not alone on earth. The group consciousness of all patterns becomes habitual. The family-consciousness, the sib-consciousness, the caste-consciousness, on the one side, as well as the territorial, i.e., rural (urban) consciousness and the still larger Gesellschaft (society or world) consciousness grow into the individual's life as almost a second nature. All these kinds of group-consciousness are evidently richer and more diversified as life-making agencies than Giddings's ultra-simple 'consciousness of kind'. The individual is not made to feel exclusively his or her dependence on the diverse groups. The individual's own responsibilities and duties in the life of the community and society are likewise established through active participation. The mutuality of functions,—'interpendence' [sic] in life's interests,—is consciously as well as unconsciously recognized as the foundation of the social pattern as organized by the *samskaras*. The social homogeneity of Durkheim's *De la division du travail social* (1893) is well illustrated in these customs although not necessarily his *contrainte sociale* (social restraint or compulsion)" (*ibid.* : 349-50).

"Sociologically, it should be," continued Sarkar, "more scientific to admit that *contrainte sociale* is, after all, a reality to a certain extent in every social pattern. Once we exclude the monistic compulsion as formulated by Durkheim we can reasonably accept the proposition that the *contrainte* as embodied in the Hindu *samskaras* is more or less akin to the compulsion of unnamed but factually existent *samskaras* that govern the social polity of the Jews and Christians of Eur-America" (*ibid.* : 350).

Sarkar declared, as if in tune with Durkheim, that "the social appeals of *samskaras* are universal" (*idem*). For the *samskaras* are valuable social forces that act as cementing bonds between the members of "the blood-pattern or

the locality-pattern" (*idem*). The series of domestic festivities marking the pre-natal stage, infancy, adolescence, youth, manhood, old age and the "post-mortem" state, observed in the social pattern of modern Eur-America, is but a manifestation of what are considered *samskaras* in the Hindu culture. It is no wonder that the Jews and Christians scarcely have any difficulty in getting "acculturated to" and assimilating them as integral parts of their life from season to season. And, there is thus hardly any justification for viewing the hold of the *samskaras* on the Hindu life 'as a mark of despotism of the old in a sinister sense' (*ibid.* : 351). The *samskaras* can maintain their existence "without much interfering with the social mobility of the individuals and groups while on the contrary enriching it with recreations, aesthetic pleasures and social joys" (*idem*). What is true of the *samskaras* of the Hindus is equally applicable to the *Sitten* and *mores* of the Indian Muslims since both the Hindu and the Moslem *samskaras* and *acharas* go back to the pre-Hindu or non-Hindu and the pre-Muslim aborigines of Bengal as of the rest of India and have, therefore, much in common.

In spite of the above similarities between Durkheim and himself Sarkar was hyper-critical of the "society-cult" of Durkheim. The Marxists erred in believing that the individual is perpetually at the mercy of the economic forces. "Similarly, the individual cannot be postulated to be invariably dominated by the society as Durkheim suggests in *Règles de la méthode sociologique* (1904) and *Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (1912). The society itself can be moulded, reshaped and transformed by the individual. There is a mutual determinism between the two. The creativity of the individual,—his creative will and intelligence,—is a force like other forces. The doctrine of intelligence as a force among, similar to and co-ordinate with other forces is thus calculated to counteract the all-too dominant economic monism of Marx as much as the Durkheimian monistic society-cult" (1941 : 127). Economic circumstances

do furnish some of the environmental or social agencies. "But the creative individual's liberty of choice and freedom of action must not be ignored as a matter of course" (*ibid.* : 128). One thus finds an element of voluntarism in Sarkar's ideas about the individual in society. "It is because of the creativity of the individual, the intelligence of man as the Kantian 'moral person', that we are in sympathy with *l' impulsion vitale* which used to be stressed by Espinas" and which bore a close affinity with "Bergson's *elan vital*" (*idem*). This impulsion creates, according to Sarkar, stir and turmoil in the individual and gives birth to the ideal that is independent of the society, the environment, the "so-called objective circumstances", and contributes to a certain extent to the very origin of the reality. "The individual and the intelligence are to be claimed as independent (although not exclusive) factors in social metabolism. It is not fatally subject to the domination of social *contrainte* (compulsion or restraint). This position should appear to be positively anti-Durkheimian" (*ibid.* : 128-129).

This anti-Durkheimian stance stood in the way of a correct evaluation of Durkheim's ideas by Sarkar. It at times landed him in confusion and self-contradiction. For example in *Creative India* (1937) Sarkar proudly demonstrated the creativity of the folk-mind of Bengal in different realms including the religious beliefs and practices and devotional poems and stories, songs and sayings (say, for example, those of Ramaprasada and Ramakrishna). All these expressions of the religious lore of the lay people paid greater attention to the "inner-self" of the devotee than to the rituals and pilgrimages and all the external paraphernalia of religious life. "It is this type of *positivism as embodied in attention to individual character* that is the most marked feature of Hindu folk-morality" (*ibid.* : 316, emphasis added to highlight a new meaning given to positivism by Sarkar). This "indifference to externals" as well as the toleration of different forms of religion and diverse faiths prevented,

according to Sarkar, the conquest of the Hindus by the other faiths: And, despite "the thousand and one rites and ceremonies attended with folk-religion or folk-religions of the Hindus the unity of the God-head furnishes the bedrock of popular intelligence and 'collective conscience' as understood by Durkheim, Lévy-Bruhl and Bouglé" (*ibid.* : 317). The external appearance of the legion of gods and goddesses and medley of rituals and ceremonies should not, Sarkar further pointed out, blind one to the genuine literary quality of the folk-poetry and other forms of devotional literature of the *bhakti* and *sakti* cults and the highly creative imagination of their composers. "Indeed, the gods and goddesses themselves are to be treated as but the 'creations' or 'inventions' of these poets, representing as they do the folk-consciousness, the conscience collective, to use an expression of Durkheim, or rather the constructive capacities of folk-imagination" (*ibid.* : 357-58 ; emphases save that on 'conscience collective' added). One finds here an endorsement of the Durkheimian interpretation of religion. But only after two pages Sarkar observed that the ever new interpretation of the importance and activities of the old deities and heroes as well as the invention of new gods and goddesses, and eponymous figures in each generation is due to the fact that it "is not the Environment or the Society-cult of Durkheim that has dominated the Hindu life" (*ibid.* : 360). This observation is sadly enough, a flat contradiction of Sarkar's earlier remarks about Durkheim and his notion of "collective conscience" and exposes a serious gap in his understanding of the ideas of the French sociologist.

Sarkar could not be criticised if he found it difficult to accept the "somewhat liberal interpretation of *contrainte* as simple regulation" which was offered by Alpert in his *Emile Durkheim and His Sociology* (New York, 1939, pp. 190-193). For, this would "deprive Durkheim of the strength of his thesis which is intended to exhibit the society as a sanction" (Sarkar, 1941 : 344, f.n. 3). But he appeared somewhat glib in invoking Durkheim and his

“*contrainte sociale*” or sociology of religion in accounting for the inability of Euro-American scholars to protest against “race-prejudice” (*ibid.* : 268) or in criticising what he thought to be misleading religio-theological interpretation of literature by the historians of literature in vernaculars of peoples in different parts of India when the latter tried to explain its development in term. of competing socio-religious systems (1937 : 345).

Benoj Kumar was out and out an individualist. Spranger’s doctrine of “the inner powers of the individual” or his dictum—“one’s own form, individuality,” William Hocking’s idea of “the incompressible individual” or the inherent rights of man as individual, or Haushofer’s rejection of “the mechanical subjection of the will to the forces of space” and his unequivocal appreciation of the mastery of man and his will over these forces were quite acceptable to Sarkar, the champion of creative individualism. He was ever critical of those who sought to emphasize the importance of society or phenomena of collective life since he read in such attempts a tendency to undermine the role and dignity of individual in human history. Bhudev Mukherjee, a Bengaliproto-sociologist of the nineteenth century was called by him “an exponent of the doctrine of the society as a mighty power” (*ibid.* : 130). Similarly, Ramendra Sundar Trivedi (1864-1922), another notable Bengali proto-sociologist, was characterized “somewhat as a societarian rather as an individualist” (*idem*). The dignity of the tradition, the folkways and the mores was upheld by both. But Sarkar’s conceptions of culture, social metabolism, transformition or progress “cannot, generally speaking, be on the side Bhudev Mukherjee or Trivedi, although both are highly substantial in many respects and often very reasonable” (*ibid.* : 130-131). He at the same time declared his “ideological affiliations with Rabindranath Tagore, “the sturdy individualist and embodiment of liberty” in all his essays as well as with Vivekananda, “the exponent of the Upanishadic ideals of moral autonomy and spiritual autarchy

for all modern individuals and societies and also with Aurobindo, the bard of the "all-conquering might of personality," and "the majesty of the individual" (*ibid.* . 131). Thus, the dignity of the individual as 'a creative agent in social metabolism, cultural transformation has been systematically upheld in this work [VTSP] as against the social determinism of Marx and Durkheim" (*ibid.* : 465 . In his essay "Sociology of Creative Disequilibrium in Education" in the *Calcutta Review* (July, 1940 . Sarkar announced that "self-help, self-direction, individual initiative and individual creativeness" constituted "the basic foundation of freedom, democracy and socialism in education and culture as in politics". He averred, "creative individualism is the life blood of my man as a moral agent".

Progress is, according to Sarkar, by no means a *mechanical series* of rational-irrational, *dharma-adharma* or good-evil complexes automatically following a course of succession. "At every stage or step, nay, at every moment there is the play of the intelligence, emotion and will of man. This intelligence, emotion and will is free, in so far as anything human can ever be free. The choice made by the self-determined individuals, by the moral personalities, is the deciding factor in the entire series. The goal is chosen by the individual. The individual selects likewise the ways and means, the *modus operandi*" (1941 : 537). Since the days of *The Science of History and the Hope of Mankind* Sarkar had nurtured the hope that the Indians would succeed in "altering the disposition of the force, of the universe" and in "the shifting of its centre of gravity" so that India should acquire a place of honour in the assembly of nations (1912c , 75). At the same time, he had, probably, a perennial anxiety that the common man of his country might succumb to the forces of the status-quo, fatalism and traditionalism and plead his inability to change the circumstances that prevailed around him. This might have been an important reason why he repeatedly emphasised the "role of the inventive pioneering, *tradition-breaking* human personality" in the

transformation of society and culture (1941 : 537) and the ability of "self-conscious and wide-awake individual" in utilizing the world forces existing at any time. He talked in terms of both capacity and responsibility of the individual, man in the singular number, for bringing about 'a change in the status quo. "The individual is" he wrote, "a responsible moral agent. His responsibility and morality consist in not only making the *contrat social* but in breaking it too at need.....In the individual's self-determined choice of the goal and the *modus operandi* 'a world that is at times and points', to use the language of the American pragmatist, John Dewey..., 'indeterminate enough to call out deliberation and to give play to choice to shape its future is a world in which will is free'. Indeterminateness furnishes the milieu of the individual's creativity and freedom". (Sarkar, 1941 : 540-541).

Sarkar did not, of course, commit the fallacy of extreme individualism. He did not totally ignore the social context in which the individual had to operate. He found the position of W.E. Hocking to have been the most "radically individualistic and self-centric or self-monistic, if not 'solipsistic'" since the American philosopher denied any importance whatsoever to society in the development of individuality, self-consciousness or self-hood. "But I differ entirely from the totalitarian negation of the social as exhibited in the above appraisal of individuality" (ibid. : 538). Further, Sarkar envisaged an active role of the state in providing the citizens with welfare services including the facilities for health and sanitation and medicare in both the developed and the backward regions of the world. This did not mean, Sarkar assured simultaneously, that the individuals, the communities or the public would behave as passive onlookers or mere recipients of the services of the state. Men as moral agents would actively participate in welfare measures including programmes for improvement of health and sanitation which would be initiated and managed primarily by the state. "My demand for *é'tatisme* and state

'patriotism' in matters of public health is then adequately orientated (*sic*) to the moral responsibilities of the individual. *Individualism must not be monistic or blind enough to overlook its limitations in schemes of social dynamics or human transformation*" (*ibid.* : 466 : emphasis added).

Considerations of the "group context" underlay Sarkar's discovery of a certain kind of affinity between his concept of creative individual and Proudhon's ideology. [Incidentally, Proudhon's idea of socialism had an important influence on Durkheim's thinking about socialism and transformation of the political system on the basis of functional representation (cf Lukes, 1975 : 248 & 541)]. Sarkar cited the opinion of Bouglé that Proudhon was convinced of the reality of the group, the *métaphysique du groupe*, the *force collective*, the revelation of reason manifesting itself in and through the society. Proudhon stressed like Comte the idea of "*l'être social* (social being), the "society as a person." But he was a confirmed *libertaire* (exponent of liberty), individualist, or "*'personalist*' in the sense of Renouvier or Kant" and, therefore, harped on the mentality of *respecte-toi* (respect thyself). The respect for the individual is Proudhon's primary contribution to ethics. "In Bouglé's words, Proudhon forced *la raison collective à consacrer le droit personnel* (the collective reason to consecrate the personal right). Proudhonism thus became antipodal to Comtism in its practical applications" (Sarkar, 1941 : 132). Proudhon's faith in the "person" was regarded by Sarkar as an old specimen of the idea of "creative individualism".

Notwithstanding the above instances of his awareness of the societal background or group-context of the individual, a very strong dose of individualism permeated Sarkar's thoughts and stood in the way of an adequate understanding by him of the nature of interaction of individual and society. This individualism was reflected in his suggestions about the methodology in social sciences and obstructed a correct appraisal by him of the ideas of thinkers like Durkheim. The characteristics of his approach (cf. sup. 152-153) to

mental and social phenomena come into clear relief when it is compared with the following observation by Durkheim : "Each mental condition is, as regards the neural cells, in the same condition of relative independence as social phenomena are in relation to individual people.....To recognize this limited autonomy of the mind is basically the same as the essential and positive content of our notion of *spirituality*. There is no need to conceive of a soul separated from its body maintaining in some ideal milieu a dreamy and solitary existence. The soul is in the world and its life is involved with the life of things, or we could say that all our thoughts are in the brain. We must add that within the brain, while they may be more related to certain areas of it than to others, they cannot be rigidly localized or situated at definite points. This diffusion in itself is sufficient proof that they constitute a specifically new phenomenon. In order that this diffusion can exist, their composition must be different from that of the cerebral mass, and consequently they must have a manner of being which is special to them" (Durkheim, 1974 : 28).

One may, then, take up the ideas of Durkheim and Sarkar about collective representation. "In order that we be able to move as necessary amid the objects of the perceptible world", wrote Durkheim in his incomplete essay, "Introduction to Morality", "we create for ourselves certain representations. We represent the sun as a flat disc of a few centimeters ; light as a thin, impalpable, weightless body which travels through the air like an arrow...and so on. The scientist frees himself from this supposed self-evidence. He replaces these false notions, which are of practical value, with entirely different ones, elaborated according to quite different methodsit must be the same way with moral matters. The representation which the common man creates for himself ... can respond to the exigencies of current practice, but it does not correspond to the fundamental nature of things and, consequently, cannot provide a basis for new practices" (Durkheim, 1978 : 198). Elsewhere Durkheim pointed out that the origin of collective representations lies

in collective life and they guide human action (Durkheim, 1954). "Now it is unquestionable that language, and consequently the system of concepts which it translates, is the product of a collective elaboration. What it expresses is the manner in which society as a whole represents the facts of experience" (*ibid.* : 434). The "most essential notions of the human mind—the notions of time, of space, of genus and species, of force and causality, of personality—those, in a word, which philosophers call categories and which dominate the entire realm of logic" were, according to Durkheim, "created in the image of social phenomena" (1978 : 147). Durkheim suggested that "the life of logic has its prime source in society. The essential characteristic of a concept, as opposed to a sensation or an image, is its impersonality : it is a representation which, to the extent that it is true to its nature, is common and communicable ; it can pass from one mind to another. It is with concepts that intellects communicate. Now a representation cannot be common to all the men of a single group unless it has been elaborated by them in common, unless it is the creation of the community. And if conceptual thought has a very special value for us, it is precisely because, being collective, it is rich in all the experience and all the science which the collectivity has accumulated in the course of centuries.....
...It is society which taught man that there was a point of view other than that of the individual and which made him see things in their wholeness" (*ibid.* : 148).

Sarkar came to discuss "collective representation" in his review of René Hubert's essay, "Le Problème Moral" in the *Revue Philosophique* (Paris, Nov.-Dec. 1934 and March-April 1935). The two kinds of morality depicted by Hubert are (a) customary morality arising out of the collective representation of each social group, which is essentially conservative and traditional : and (b) reflective morality emanating from reflection or reflective practical reason that can look upon itself as the object of criticism and reflection, which is *a priori*, the faculty or power of judgment, and manifests itself

in autonomous decisions and personal innovations and actions for change. Between these two extremes of morality—the social and the *a priori*—there has always been a double movement: (a) a downward movement whereby the spirit on getting divided, fragmented and atomised becomes customary or social morality, i.e., gets embodied in the beliefs and institutions of successive civilisations and assumes a fixity as reflected in the religions of dogmas and ritualisms; and (b) an upward movement which witnesses the ascent of the spirit from the collective representations or social moralities during the crises that appear on account of the mixture of populations and of different civilisations.

The “genesis of collective representation, i.e., of social morality is a phenomenon of spiritual strangulation or breathlessness” but the reflective morality questions every thing prevalent and attempts at the reconstruction of the existing world view, i.e., engenders revolution. Extolling the latter variety Sarkar observed, “This incessantly revolutionary character constitutes the glory of all the greatest creators of morality. Neither Socrates nor Jesus, nor Kant nor Nietzsche was wanting in the revolutionary character. The effort of the spirit to judge in its own name all that is, define itself in the face of all that is, and recover, in opposition to all that drags down, the freedom of action and initiative of the movement towards on high is the form assumed by every progress of reflective morality. And it is by accepting this view of progress that all the great creators of morality have obeyed the superior law of the spirit” (Sarkar, 1939 CR May : 174).

Durkheim's reply to the contention above would have been that ‘Socrates expressed, more clearly than his judges, the morality suited to his time. It would be easy to show that, as a result of the transformation of the old society based on the *gens* and consequent disturbance of religious beliefs, a new morality and religious faith had become necessary in Athens. It would be equally simple to demonstrate that this aspiration towards a new formulation was not felt by

Socrates alone, but that there was already a powerful current represented by the attitudes of the Sophists. It is in this sense that Socrates was ahead of his time while at the same time expressing its spirit" (1974 : 65). Durkheim did not, of course, explain why it was Socrates rather than anybody else of his society who went ahead of his time. But he thought that even in challenging the existing rules of society an individual with a revolutionary fervour simply seeks to bring about a conformity between them and the true nature of society. The difference between Hubert a la Sarkar and Durkheim is clearly brought out in the preceding observation of Durkheim.

The problematic issue of the relation between individual and society was taken much more seriously by Durkheim than Sarkar who talked mainly in terms of the antithesis between individual and society, which appeared to the French sociologist a false anti-thesis. In course of his discussion of rights and liberties of the individual Durkheim pointed out, "These rights and liberties are not things inherent in man as such. If you analyse man's constitution you will find no trace of this sacredness with which he is invested and which confers upon him these rights. This character has been added to him by society" (1974 : 72). He too like Hubert and Sarkar noticed the periods of creation or renewal in the life of societies (in the west) following great crises, e.g., the "great crisis of Christendom", the Reformation, the Renaissance and the French Revolution. But when the latter simply noticed the emergence of the reflective morality challenging the customary morality as a mere sequel to the mixture of populations and of different civilisations, Durkheim advanced a causal explanation of the phenomenon. He emphasised that "at such moments of collective ferment" (ibid. : 91), the rhythm of social life becomes more quickened and the resultant intensity of social life takes the form of constant private and public meetings between its members. The greater the intensity of social life, the greater is the probability that out of this crucible of ideas some new ideal will emerge. Durkheim too envisioned the progressive emancipation of man, the individ-

dual. But the progressive emancipation of the individual does not, in his understanding, imply a weakening but a transformation of the social bonds. "The individual submits", we read, "to society and this submission is the condition of his liberation. For man freedom consists in deliverance from blind, unthinking physical forces ; this he achieves by opposing against them the great and intelligent force which is society, under whose protection he shelters. By putting himself under the wing of society, he makes himself also, to a certain extent, dependent upon it. But this is a liberating dependence. There is no paradox here" (Durkheim, 1974 :72). Beside this real and living "individual in society" of Durkheim the individual depicted by Sarkar pales into a sort of abstractness, Sarkar's occassional references to the social background of the individual notwithstanding.

IV

Benoy Kumar Sarkar had been, points out Krishna Prakash Gupta, perhaps the only Indian Sociologist to react to the ideas of Max Weber even before the English translations of Weber's works became available. Sarkar's analysis of the religion and society of India repudiated Weber's picture of Hindu escapism and stagnation. It also "sought to do for India precisely what Weber had done for the West" (Gupta, 1974 : 23). As Weber started with the Judaic tradition, so Sarkar began with Mahenjo-Daro, and as Weber terminated his discussion with modern capitalism so Sarkar also ended with the new resurgent India wherein he noticed with confidence and satisfaction the expansion of capitalism and industrialization (Sarkar, 1937).

In doing this Sarkar not only established an analytical equivalence between India and the West but also postulated a substantive identity between the inherent 'rationalism' of Christianity and the unbroken 'materialistic' tradition of Hinduism (Sarkar 1937 a : 6, 634-636). This equivalence was however, neglected, rather, contradicted, by Sarkar himself when he expressed his sympathy with the Western theory of

the West's mission of modernizing Asia (cf. Sarkar, 1922 a : 5-6, 151-154).

Albeit, one may, in the light of the preceding facts expect a detailed examination of Weber's ideas in Sarkar's works. One finds, instead, only occasional references to Weber in his writings and that too in a tangential form. Many of the comments by Sarkar which might be taken as criticism of Weber were, it has been shown above, really made about Max Müller (cf. *sup.* 156ff.). "It was in 1922 in the milieu of the economist, Professor Herman Schumacher, at Berlin" admitted Sarkar himself in the only full length article on Weber's ideas by him, "that I came into contact with the circle of Max Weber (1864-1920). I do not recall having taken interest in Weber as an economist. It was rather as a sociologist or philosopher that I considered him to be one of the numerous worthwhile German thinkers. Since then his ideas have been often utilized by me in discussions and publications" (1949a : 403). But the corpus of writings by Sarkar till 1922, or, one may say, till 1928, wherein his main ideas regarding the nature of Indian society and religion took a more or less definite shape, hardly contains a reference to Max Weber. It is, of course, true that "the fallacies of pioneer indologists like Max Müller, Emile Senart and Max Weber.....have been examined in the present author's [i. e., Sarkar's] *Introduction to Hindu Positivism* (Allahabad 1937) which is one of the volumes of the *Positive Background of Hindu Sociology...*" (Sarkar, 1942 : 132). One should also note that in course of his criticism of "the misleading influence of Max Weber's *Gesammelte Aufsaetze Zur Religionssociologie* (Tuebingen 1922)" on the interpretations of Hinduism and Buddhism by the western scholars, Sarkar added in a footnote that "Max Weber's interpretation of Confucianism is also nothing but conventional, as the data in the present author's *Chinese Religion Through Hindu Eyes* (Sanghai, 1916) would indicate" (*ibid.* : 144, f. n. 12). Incidentally, CRTHE did not mention the name of Weber or any work by him even for once. All this indicates that Sarkar anticipated and contradicted some

of the arguments of Weber regarding the prospect of development of modern economic institutions in India and other countries of Asia at a time when he did not actually go through the writings of the German savant.

It was, probably for the first time, in 1936 that Sarkar mentioned Weber as a sociologist whose views were worth considering (1936 : 9). He cautioned, however, the readers against the "monistic interpretations" of social phenomena as evidenced in the "religious interpretation" of culture as propagated by Fustel de Coulanges in *La Cite' antique* or by Max Weber in *Gesammelte Aufsaetze Zur Religionssociologie*" (*ibid.* : 12). Sarkar briefly but unequivocally challenged the postulate of Max Müller, Sénart, Max Weber and others "that the culture created by the people of India is essentially speculative, pessimistic and mystical" (*idem*). Creative India's role in the evolution of "social energism" and secular enterprises is, Sarkar hastened to add, "being recognised more and more in the East and the West" (*idem*).

In the second edition of PBHS which appeared in the following year, Sarkar once again criticised Weber's essays on the relation between religion and economic life or economic ethics (*Wirtschaftsethik*), finally published in GARS (particularly vol. II) since they conveyed "the conventional message" that "worldly life was despised and secular activities condemned by Indians of all ages. The Hindus and Buddhists are described as being alike in the aversions to material pursuits and in the predilections for meditation and other-worldly salvation. *This kind of indology has been propagated on a large scale among the economists, philosophers and sociologists of the twentieth century on account of Max Weber's sociological investigations*" (1937a : 18; emphases added). The Asian scholars also got indoctrinated with the indology of Müller and Weber and came to seriously accept the alleged distinction between the orient and the occident. Sarkar, therefore, untiringly repeated, though not always with substantial evidence and sound logic, that the distinction between the East and the West, historically considered, "is not a

distinction in ideals or outlook on life but a difference in the grade or degree of the remaking of man. An objective measure is furnished by the achievements of technology" (1936 : 78). Down to the Middle Ages the ideologies and institutions in the orient and occident had, according to him, more similarities than differences. The first important differentia between the two worlds appeared only with the advent of the industrial revolution in the West. For nearly two generations, however, Great Britain, the pioneer of industrial revolution continued to tower above the rest of Euro-America. Even in the first quarter of the twentieth century there was a great disparity among different nations of Euro-America in terms of industrial advancement. "The dynamics of social metabolism in so far as they 'historically' happen to be indifferent to religion, race or region, or rather affect them in a more or less uniform manner, should to this extent call for a considerable modification of the laws of *Wirtschaftsethik* for ancient and medieval conditions as propounded by Max Weber. His viewpoints on Hinduism and Buddhism are conventional and one-sided and not based on the Indian data of 'positive' sociology" (*idem*).

Weber spoke of "the commanding role of religion in economic life" (Sarkar, 1937a 22). But his thesis appeared to Sarkar untenable as an explanation of historical facts. "It may be admitted that religion was a social force in Hindu Culture only in the sense in which it is used by Durkheim in his *Formes élémentaires de la vie religieuse* (Paris, 1912), namely that the very concept of society is in every region and age essentially religious. But using Max Weber's language we can concede that in India as elsewhere religion was but one of the diverse determinants of *Wirtschaftsethik*, i. e., economic ethics. While dealing with the landmarks of Hindu literature we should therefore take care not to be misled simply because of its religious externals and envelope" (*idem*). Thus, in Sarkar's conception Weber's ideas came to be associated with religious determinism (cf. 1937 : 248).

Also, Weber was viewed to have dabbled in fallacious

exercises in constructing religious typology according to which the Hindu system as well as the other socio-religious systems of Asia belonged to a type which was essentially different from that of the western societies (Sarkar, 1941 : 304 and 337). Probably, these impressions of Weber prevented Sarkar from making a detailed study of the contribution made by the German scholar to sociology.

In his review essay (Sarkar, 1949a) on Parson's English translation of Weber's ideas on economy and society Sarkar wrote that "Weber's passion for 'ideal types' is too profound to enable him to realize the existence of mixed situations such as conform to no types" (*ibid.* : 404). It accounts for Weber's inability to discover the materialistic, positive and secular elements in Hinduism, Buddhism and "other Oriental isms". Weber's Comparative Studies in socio-religious anthropology and history were fallacious since they were based on "one-sided researches, especially the orientalists, who were obsessed by alleged mystical and other-worldly elements in culture patterns of India, China and so forth" (*idem*). Obviously, Sarkar did not appreciate the methodological importance of "ideal types" in sociology which would have to take into account the demands for comprehending the generality of human societies and cultures so that a comparison of them is feasible and the need for understanding the distinctiveness and particularities of specific socio-cultural configurations in the continuum of history (cf. Coser, 1977 : 223-24). But his criticism of Weber's dependence on secondary sources of a particular variety for the analysis of Hinduism clearly anticipated the criticism of Weber by Milton Singer on the same ground (cf. Singer, 1972 : 278, 281).

Weber's discussion of 'charisma' in course of his socio-logical analysis of economic institutions was favourably viewed by Sarkar. "A most substantial and delightful analysis furnished by Weber is that of charismatic authority" (Sarkar, 1949a : 405). Weber correctly observed that pure charisma is specifically foreign to economic considerations ; "whenever it appears, it constitutes a 'call' in the most empha-

tic sense of the word, a ‘mission’ or a ‘spiritual duty’” (Weber, 1964 : 362). Lenin, Hitler, Mussolini and Gandhi could, Sarkar thought, be regarded as examples of Weber’s charismatic authority and some illustrations of “routinization of charisma” might be observed in the “post-Gandhi structure and functioning of the Indian National Congress as in the post-Lenin Bolshevism of Soviet Russia” (Sarkar, 1949a :405 ; cf. Fletcher, 1972 : 453). But he sharply disagreed with Weber’s characterisation of caste in India as a classical case of the development of charisma. “The succession of gurus or spiritual preceptors by heredity may be conceded to be a case of the inheritance of charismatic qualities. But, then, the position, office or service of the guru is not a caste attribute” (*idem*). Weber was “essentially unfactual and wrong” in his assertion that the inheritance of charismatic qualities is true of all positions in the village organisation of Hindu India, such as priest, barber, laundryman, etc. Sarkar expressed his inability to understand what sort of charisma lay in the barber or laundryman. He appears to have paid no attention to or disapproved of the following comments which Weber made in continuation of his illustration of hereditary charisma in India, Japan and China. “This kind of hereditary charismatic right to positions of authority has been developed in similar ways all over the world. Qualification by virtue of individual achievement has been replaced by qualification by birth....Indeed, this is to be found everywhere where hereditary status-groups have become established” (Weber, 1978 : 254 ; also, Weber 1964 : 372).

The analysis of economic phenomena like paper-money, note-banks, etc., by Weber bore, according to Sarkar, testimony to his profound knowledge not only of sociology but of economics. “Weber gave due stress on economic factor but he did not consider it the only important element in social causation. Hence he might be regarded as a modified Marxist” (*ibid.* : 406). To take an example, Weber most sensibly observed that economic orientation or orientation to profit-making had by no means the only factor behind the development of

technology. "In addition, a part has been played by the imagination and cognition of impractical dreamers, a part by other-worldly interests and all sorts of fantasies, a part by preoccupation with artistic problems, and by various other non-economic factors" (Weber, 1964 : 163 ; cited in Sarkar op. cit : 406-407). Sarkar might have cited the preceding statement as an indicator of admission by the western scholar of the possibility of economic development in India, in spite of her so-called other-worldliness. What, however, he made explicit was his appreciation of what he took for Weber's multi-causal theory of social change. "The materialistic interpretation of the monistic—*advaitavadi*—pattern is not Weberian" (Sarkar, 1949a : 407). Sarkar regarded (a) Weber's emphasis on the role and importance of common value attitudes of a primarily non-economic character in labour organisations, (b) his recognition of non-economic forces and motives in the analysis of political authority, and (c) his disavowal of the Marxist notion of the unity of the working class, different segments of which betrayed, according to Weber, qualitative differentiation, as further examples of the "anti-monistic, pluralistic approach" of the German sociologist. "This is why he is often posed as the antipode to Marx. This, however, is not quite a correct appraisal, because he goes as a rule very far in attaching economic values to economic, political, social and other actions" (*idem*).

Sarkar's appraisal of Parsons' English translation of Weber's writings and his introduction to the translation may evoke the interest of the students of sociology. Thus the equivalent of *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, a part of which was translated by Parsons, would be *Economy and Society* and not T. E. S. O. Then, Parsons repeatedly spoke of Weber's work as a study of modern European or Western institutions. "This is eminently questionable. Weber is not a writer of sociography and he is not dissecting the social structure of any particular epoch or race" (*ibid.* : 406). Weber cited cases from different societies like ancient China, Egypt, Greece, Rome and India as well as the Middle Ages in order

to illustrate his concepts and categories. "Weber is no more a sociographist of the modern West than is Pareto...a sociographist of Italy...Both are analyzers and interpreters, each in his own way, and both have looked for specimens of their categories according to the extent of each one's anthropological and historical knowledge" (*idem*).

Despite the above shortcomings, Parsons' introduction to his translation of Weber's T. E. S. O. was "valuable as a summary of Weber's ideas and ideologies" (*idem* : 408). A "very fundamental contribution of Weber" lay in his concept of capitalism as influenced by the Protestant Ethic. And, Parsons 'quite rightly draws prominent attention to the fact' that Weber did not include "acquisitiveness or a valuation of profit" in his idea of "calling" which he showed to be an important element in the development of the spirit of capitalism. The spirit as defined by Weber is not wholly acquisitiveness or profit-chasing. It is similar to the spirit which informs the calling or vocations of the "scientist, physician, civil servant or even Christian minister" which are generally appraised as non-acquisitive and "in which the profit motive is not supposed to play any part" (Parsons, 1964 : 81). This "substantial observation" of Parsons would serve to enlighten researches in Weberism, observed Saikar (op. cit : 408). He inferred, with a touch of ingenuity, from Parsons' analysis of Weber's notion of calling and the spirit of capitalism, that the spirit of capitalism "is akin to a 'calling' or vocation of life", somewhat like the Hindu *Swadharma* (one's own duty) (*idem*). One gets here another specimen of Saikar's ideas of 'parallelisms' between the Hindu and Western systems of ideas and thoughts.

What is more interesting is his comparison of the ideas of Vivekananda and Weber. "The Vedantic ethic," we read, "which has got a fresh lease of life under the creative impulse of Vivekananda (1806—1902) may be taken to be a cognate of Weber's Protestant ethic. Vivekananda's Vedanta exhorts men and women to pursue material interests and carry on investigations into material prosperity in a manner not necessarily materialistic, sordid or worldly-wise. The spirit of Viveka-

nanda's materialism is the spirit of a professional service or vocational *swadharma* which one has to perform not because of the gains expected but because of the duty to be discharged" (*idem*). Whether Parsons would have agreed to this comparison between the Weberian notion of calling and the Hindu concept of Swadharma (rather, Vivekananda's interpretation of the same, as understood by Sarkar) is not known. But a faithful follower of Weber would immediately point out how consistently and obstinately Weber held to the idea of a qualitative distinction between the concept of 'calling' in the Protestant Ethic and the Hindu idea of Dharma as elaborated in the ideology of caste. The puritan concept of calling always put, observed Weber, emphasis on the methodical character of worldly ascetism, "not, as with Luther, *on the acceptance of the lot which God has irretrievably assigned to man*" (Weber, 1974 : 162, emphases added). Therefore, continued Weber, "the question whether any one may combine several callings is answered in the affirmative....*Even a change of callings is by no means objectionable*, if it is not thoughtless and is made for the purpose of pursuing a calling more pleasing to God, which means, on general principles, one more useful" (*idem* : emphasis added). Contrastingly enough, "*Dharma*, that is ritualistic duty, is the central criterion of Hinduism (Weber, 1958 : 24). And, what is the content of *Dharma* to a Hindu? *Dharma* differs according to social position; "*dharma* depends upon the caste into which the individual is born" (*ibid.* : 25). And, the caste system, by its nature, is, in Weber's judgment, completely traditionalistic and anti-rational in its effects and is, therefore, inimical to any move towards the modern economic system. "The core of the obstruction was imbedded in the 'spirit' of the whole system.....A ritual law in which every change of occupation, every change in work technique, may result in ritual degradation is certainly not capable of giving birth to economic and technical revolutions from within itself, or even of facilitating the first germination of capitalism in its midst" (*ibid.* : 112)

Of course, years after Sarkar had written, a noted American anthropologist discovered parallels between the Calvinistic and Hindu eschatology. "In both a vocational ethic enjoins industriousness and dedication to one's 'calling' as a moral duty. Competence and success in one's calling are linked in both to a transcendental goal of spiritual salvation. In Hinduism, the link has been described in the lofty philosophical doctrine of the *Bhagavadgita*, which assures to householders, women, and Sudras, a path to salvation in the performance of their daily work, provided their performance is not motivated by a desire for the selfish enjoyment of the fruits thereof. Tilak, Gandhi and other modern Hindu leaders applied this analogue of the 'Protestant ethic' to justify programs of political and economic activism" (Singer, 1974 : 280).

Weber was, in Sarkar's estimation, a great sociologist who represented a "transition" from the old to the new viewpoints in sociology. He shared the characteristics of encyclopaedic culture-historians and historians of ideas like Spencer and Comte and at the same time some features of sociologists with a slant towards social psychology, viz., Ratzenhofer and Giddings. "But he was something more. He considered his function to be neither historical nor psychological but mainly that of 'interpretation' and of 'understanding'" (Sarkar, op. cit. : 408). "And the subject of his 'interpretive understanding' was social action" (*idem*). The position taken by Weber in elucidating the concept of social action "is substantially different" from those of Tarde, Ratzenhofer or Giddings (*ibid.* 409). Weber's category of social action brought him "somewhere between" Toennies to whom the analysis of social processes is the fundamental function of sociology and Simmel, who was interested in investigating into the forms of society-making, or, rather, von Wiese who espoused the cause of formal sociology. Lewis A Coser too pointed out that among the sociologists of his time Toennies and Simmel influenced Weber most (Coser, 1977 : 248-249).

Sarkar was critical of Weber's alleged "passion for typology" when it was applied to classification of cultures on the basis of supposedly dominant religious ethos.

But Weber's chapters on the analysis of three different types of authority appeared to him 'brilliant'. This exercise in typology of authority belonged, in his opinion, to the analytical or formal school of sociology which was later developed by von Wiese. Sarkar urged, in this connection, that the students of sociology should pay more attention to formal sociology than before and referred in defence of his views to an article by Talcott Parsons in the *American Sociological Review* of April, 1948. The above account suggests that Sarkar could not fully appreciate the richness of Weber's sociology of *verstehen*. Sarkar's relative unconcern with Weber's discourses on rationality and rational authority which constituted a pillar of modern capitalism, rather, modern industrial technological civilisation, seems inexplicable particularly in the context of his eagerness as well as anxiety over the development of capitalism and industrialisation and rationalisation in India. Sarkar did, of course, exhort the students of philosophy, economics, sociology and political science on getting "well acculturated to" the concepts and categories in the sociology of Max Weber.

One might expect from Sarkar a better treatment of Weber's sociology of social action and its meaning in presence of the evidence of his familiarity with the ideas of Dilthey to whom Weber owed much of his notion of *verstehen* (cf. Coser, 1974 : 220, 245-246). He read in Dilthey's ideas a declared emphasis on the value of self-conscious and self-determined individual, on the autonomy of the spirit. "The 'categorical imperative' of Kant has to be modified, says Dilthey, because a duty simple to discover and identical everywhere, which will lead to an obligation equally simple and universal, does not exist. What exist in reality, according to Dilthey, are the determining motives of human action (*Aus Fuenfzig Jahren deutscher Wissenschaft*, Berlin 1930). This is a view of individual independence and per-

sonal liberty without which morality becomes too mechanical" (Sarkar, 1941 : 537).

It was an article by Sarkar in the *Calcutta Review* in 1939 (parts of which were reproduced in Sarkar, 1941 and in Sarkar, 1942) that depicted Dilthey as an harbinger of a new tendency in German philosophy. About 1890 the German academics had, informed Sarkar, a feeling that philosophy had come to an end and all that remained was to study the history of philosophy. But after four decades philosophy came to be established once more fully in its own scientific right. "Today [i.e., in 1930] it is no longer naturalistic and relativistic tendency but the idealistic and absolutist that is predominant. The autonomy of the spirit, its speciality and its laws, its freedom and self-direction are the topics of philosophy at the present moment. And in this transformation of philosophical discipline a pioneer is Dilthey (1833-1911). It is Dilthey who combated the naturalistic philosophy of history and sociology" (Sarkar, 1939 CR June : 183). Sarkar correctly hinted, again in his aphoristic style, at the important role played by Dilthey in social sciences. "The German investigations (in the science of men) are based on the anti-thesis between nature and spirit, nature and history, nature and culture, nature and society. Such anti-theses were created by the romanticists as well as their followers, e.g., Dilthey, Windelband and Rickert. All these go back to the Kantian antithesis, nature vs. morality" (ibid. : 185). Writers on the history of sociology like Lewis A. Coser (1974 : 245) accept that Wilhelm Dilthey, the culture-historian, and Wilhelm Windelband and Heinrich Rickert, the neo-Kantians, sought, each in his own way, to combat naturalism and materialism in the sciences of men and defend their distinctiveness against the 'positivistic heresy'. All of them influenced Weber by transmitting to him some of the classical Kantian doctrines. Sarkar was extremely sketchy in his discussion of Dilthey and the two neo-Kantians and completely silent on their influence on Weber.

By way of introducing the Kantian background of

modern German philosophy, Sarkar remarked. "It is entirely illegitimate to place on the same level a morality which comes out of one world, one age, one people or one tradition, all of which are well-determined, and an eternal nature, a starred heaven which has seen and will see this morality as many other moralities. Morality cannot by any means have the same dignity as Nature. But this is what Kant did by establishing, first, the anti-thesis between the two. This position is due to his ultra-rationalism, the desire for symmetry, which characterizes eighteenth century thought" (*ibid.* : 185). Dilthey did not, he pointed out, agree to many of the ideas of Kant, though his contraposition of Nature and Culture was related to the Kantian thought. Nor did he share, Sarkar was happy to note, Spengler's ideas about the retrogression of human culture and civilization in modern times in comparison with what obtained in the Middle ages ; he envisioned, on the contrary, a continuous progress of the humanity along a straight line. Dilthey did not, Sarkar pointed out, believe in the universality of historic conscience. "According to Kant conscience is the categorical imperative and the sovereign good which affects all the human wills universally. But Dilthey believes that there is no good outside the will. Every good alleged to exist outside the will, i.e., every good in itself is only an empty *hypostasia* of what resides in the will. A duty, simple to discover by everybody and identical everywhere, which will lead to an obligation equally simple and universal does not exist. In Dilthey's analysis, what exists is the determining motives of human action, and these are the only contents of moral conscience. The diverse ethical systems contradict one another only when each one professes to represent the totality of ethics. There should be no contradiction and they will supplement one another, says Dilthey, if they are considered as different parts of this ethics. The moral organization and the absolute manner with which the conviction apprehends the good are invariable. In other words, the moral law is unconditioned and

absolute. But the world of values and the interpretation of moral organization are variable factors" (*ibid.* : 184).

Sarkar was more descriptive than analytical in his presentation of the ideas of Dilthey. But his above description of Dilthey's views was immediately followed by the criticism of Eric Unger that with hardly any exception, the methodology of German ethics is non-sociological because of its preoccupation with the *a priori*, the value, the norm, the spirit and the idea and its neglect of "the most fundamental character of moral life, that morality is *fait d'ici-bas*, a fact of the here below" (*ibid.* : 185). The French sociological school was, on the other hand, depicted as having been interested in "the physico-moral experience, just the items that have been inadequately distinguished by German philosophers" (*idem*). Though it is difficult to infer anything definite from the discursive presentation by Sarkar, his appreciation of a kind of sociology which would deal with the hard facts of life and actual problems of society is nonetheless discernible. He did not however abjure idealism or his quest for the universal laws emanating from the "similarities" of cultures and civilisations. Indeed, the dilemma as to whether the peculiarities or the uniformities of human societies should be emphasized haunted Sarkar again and again.

For example, Hans Freyer, the author of *Soziologie als Wirklichkeits-wissenschaft* (Sociology as the Science of Reality), Leipzig, 1930, and *Theorie des objectiven Geistes* (Theory of the Objective Spirit), 1932, rejected the *ueberzeitlich* or timeless categories of the formal sociology of Leopold von Wiese. And, Sarkar appeared to have admired his ideas. "In his (Freyer's) judgment", observed Sarkar, "all life is historical. He is therefore interested supremely in the dynamic, the growth and the development. The analysis of the present order of society and the investigation of its inner structure are to him more important than the merely formal analysis of the social relations. Contact with contemporary politics is a chief feature of his scientific thought. Indeed, in Vol. I of the present author's *Political Philosophies Since 1905* (Madras,

1928) Freyer's *Der Staat* (The State), 1926, was analyzed as embodying some messages calculated to promote the remaking of man" (1939 CR June : 186). Sarkar did appreciate Freyer's message that the "state will have to be willed" and that the "necessity of a state implies a call to the will of the generation" of men that is conscious and active enough to discharge the responsibility (1928 : 183-184). But did he prefer Freyer's view of the task of sociology or social science to that of von Wiese ? Or did he approve of Freyer's view of the state only ? Sarkar's clear enunciation of the task of sociology after the the model of von Wiese rules out any positive answer to the first question (cf. 1941 : 665). In case the answer to the second question were positive, how far was it valid to pick up certain ideas of a particular thinker in a piecemeal manner and without any regard to the totality of his ideas or his general approach ?

A further evidence of Sarkar's awareness of the need for recognising the peculiarities of individuals and historical situations may be noticed in his brief description of the evolution of the German educational ideals, one of the motley subjects dealt with in the essay under scrutiny. The German educational ideals moved from the emphasis on encyclopaedic burden of subjects in school life in the nineteenth century through, first, Dilthey's pedagogic ideal of experiences at random and, then, the pedagogics of expressions towards "the ethical". Sarkar seemed to have countenanced the ethical ideal which suggested that "Every individual has to decide in the last analysis for the moral obligations. The eternal aim of education is to awaken the inner powers of the individual which are adapted to the objective laws of the moral and cultural structure of the community..... One's own form, individuality—the foundation of eternal structural laws, has to be discovered for every person by the educator" (1939 CR June : 185-186). In a few lines after it Sarkar approvingly cited the statement of Cay von Brockdorff that "all truth would only be historical not absolute" (cited by Sarkar, ibid. : 187). Withal, Sarkar felt more comfortable in the

parlour of those who highlighted the generalities and uniformities of societies and cultures, rather, Asian and Euro-American civilisations. He noticed with satisfaction the transformation in German ideas on the orient and ancient world particularly in the writings of Lueders, von Glasenapp, Breloer, Piper and the like. Unlike the earlier German thinkers, these indologists brought out the uniformities of the European and Indian socio-cultural systems, more specifically, in the sphere of secular and worldly activities. Every reader of Helmut Piper's works on China and Japan and on India, "even if he be a specialist in Chinese and Japanese questions, will be agreeably surprised to discover many parallelisms and identities with the expressions of European Civilizations such as have as a rule been overlooked in conventional treatises on history" (ibid. : 192 ; emphasis added). The second edition of the PBHS (1937a) is a long elaboration of this note of appreciation of Sarkar for the new genre of Indology reflected in the writings of scores of Euro-American scholars who focussed on the similarities of the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains of India with the people of the occident in their attitudes towards worldly success as well as their achievements in the material field. For example, Sarkar was happy to mention Lüder's view that (a) it is not true that the strong tendency towards the inner and the other-worldly completely absorbed the energies of the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains of India and led to their retreat from life and their inaction, (b) the Buddhists and Jains once comprised and even today find an important place in the richest class of India ; (c) the Brahmanical system attempted to establish an "*Ausgleich* (balance) between the life in this world and the flight from the world" (1937a : 41).

Similarly, he strongly supported Helmuth von Glasenapp's criticism of Albert Schweitzer's total neglect of the world-affirming elements in the life of the Indians. The world-denying tendencies had, von Glasenapp pointed out, been present in the first fifteen hundred years of Christianity and *Erloesung* (moksha, salvation) has been but one of the four objectives of

human existence in the Hindu view of life. To von Glasenapp “an essential difference between the ‘life-denying Indians’ and the ‘life-affirming Westerns’ does not exist..” (ibid. : 44). The *Daseinsfreude* (joy of life), *Tatendurst* (thirst for action), *heroischer Sinn* (heroic sense), *Lebensklugheit* (thirst for action), and *werktaetige Naechstenliebe* (practical philanthropy) find an equally important place with the life-denying tendencies in the “organic unity ” of the Indian world view. “The Linga cult, Saaktaism, and Krishna-worship with its fertility-rites point in the clearest manner to the fact that a one-sided life-denial never found a place in the sphere of religious belief also” (ibid. : 45). The spirit of this “New Indology” of Lüders and von Glasenapp underlay, Sarkar showed, the writings of other German indologists like Alfred Hillebrandt, Johann Meyer, Bernhard Breloer, James Jolly, Winternitz, as well as British scholars like A. B. Keith and Italian savants like Formichi or American scholars like Sorokin.

V

Sarkar had been known in certain quarters to be a follower of Johann Gottfried Herder (Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 72). And if von Glasenapp’s remark that “With Herder began for the first time (in German thought) an intensive, loving preoccupation with Indian culture ..” (1973 : 212) is acceptable, it is probably equally true that Sarkar referred to Herder’s views on progress and nation and nationalism more frequently than anybody else among his contemporaries in Bengal or India (see Sarkar in Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 72 ; Sarkar, 1940 : 483 ; Ghoshal in Sarkar, 1940 : 470-471). Herder’s ideas were not uncritically accepted by Sarkar. The latter seriously controverted Herder’s ideas on nation and nationalism, though he admired Herder’s ideas on progress. Sarkar depicted Herder and not Comte, to be the actual founder of sociology, but his own ideas about culture and society appeared at places almost diametrically opposed to the ideas of the German thinker.

His many references to Herder’s views notwithstanding, Sarkar did not write even an article on Herder and hailed

Subodh Krishna Ghoshal's essay on Herder as the first article in Bengali on the German savant (Sarkar, 1940 : 483). The theories of Herder and Condorcet about progress deserved, he felt, specialized and intensive analysis. "Unluckily, the original texts are difficult to find in India. The few notes that I collected in the libraries of the continent about a decade ago are too inadequate for the present purpose Bury's two pages on Herder are suggestive and useful" (Sarkar, 1941 : 517). Herder's *Saemtliche Werke* (Berlin, 1877-1913), Vol. XIII (pages 384-385) as well as R. R. Ergang's *Herder and the Foundations of German Nationalism* (New York 1931) was just mentioned by Sarkar in footnote 1 at page 502 of C. I. in course of his very brief discussion of the implications of "Herderian and Fichtean romanticism" as embodied in the ideas of linguistic or cultural soul, *Volksseele*, *Volksgeist*, etc., for literary growth of "Young India". The saga by Sarkar of the achievements of the youth in V.T.S.P began with a reference to Herder (1941 : 653-655). "The *Leitmotif* of Herder's world culture movement was in evidence in the work on modern German literature published at 23 in 1767 and in that on philosophy of history at 30 in 1774" (ibid. : 655). The two works referred to were *Ueber die neuere Deutsche Literatur* (1767) and *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte* (1774) (ibid. : 53). "Herder and Condorcet are," observed Sarkar, "two of the pioneers of modern sociology" (ibid. : 518). There is no special reason why modern sociology should be thought to have commenced with Comte and not with Herder. Viewed in the light of sociology of recent times, Comte appears to be a propagator of historical philosophy, culture history or philosophical history. And Herder and Condorcet too were social historians or culture historians or historical philosophers and social philosophers (ibid. : 526). "Indeed, Comte belongs more to the milieu of Herder and Condorcet as having chief interest in the evolution of mankind" than to the world of modern American sociology (ibid. : 519). And since Herder (1774-1803) appeared on the scene at least half a century earlier

than Comte (1798-1857) with his speculations about the evolution of human history, Herder deserved, in Sarkar's opinion, a better title to the status of the pioneer in sociology.

Herder seemed to be eminently correct in maintaining "in his *Ideen Zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* (1874) that the highest was yet to be realized. The concept of infinite possibilities was expressed likewise by Condorcet..." (ibid. : 515). But Condorcet appeared to Sarkar unacceptable insofar as the former believed that human beings are capable of ultimate perfection. Herder was deemed more reasonable than Condorcet "when, once in a while, he declares that evil is eternal and that, therefore, man cannot attain perfection" (ibid. : 516). Bury rightly noticed in Herder's thought this opposition to the hypothesis of a final and unique state of perfection as the goal of history. On the whole, however, Herder's conviction that "all the up-to-date achievements of human spirit are nothing but the means to the more profound establishment and wider expansion of the humanity and cultures of our generation" was shared by Condorcet and Godwin. This idea of the eternal perfectibility of human condition and the infinite possibilities of improvement of the human life was almost an article of faith with Sarkar. "In Herder's ideology, however," pointed out Sarkar, "there is the doctrine of *Gang Gottes ueber die Nationen* (the march of God through the nations). In my conception of finality-less and eternal developments it is not necessary to postulate a divinity" (ibid. : 517).

In his *Creative India* Sarkar wrote, "Today in Indian thought German *Kultur* is a living stream of contributions to nationalism and the world-forces from Herder to Hitler" (1937 : 486-487). The extensive and intensive studies in indology by the German scholars were the most potent agent in effecting the influence of Germany and Austria on the Indian mind. And Herder was one of

the trendsetters in German indology. It was Herder, noted Sarkar, who introduced Foster's German rendering of Jones's English version of the *Sakuntala* (*Abhijnana Sakuntalam*) by Kalidasa to Goethe and Schiller and it had a tremendous impact on them, particularly on Goethe, and as a result, on the German literati (ibid. : 109 & 487). Herder was responsible also for popularising the *Gita* in Germany and Humboldt was a close associate in this matter (ibid. : 110). Since the days of the Swadeshi Movement the natives of different parts of India had sincerely and seriously tried to improve their mother tongues so that the most advanced discourses in science, technology and other branches of knowledge, could be carried out through them. "In this as in other trends of literary growth Young India is exhibiting not only the nationalistic animus of the Poles, Czechs, Serbs, and Irish but also the Herderian and Fichtean romanticism for the linguistic or cultural soul, *Volksseele*, *Volksgeist*, etc." (ibid. : 502). Also, the Czech people's interest in the revival of the Czech language and the resuscitation of their national identity as evinced, for example, in Kollar's interest in Herder "have some meaning in India today" (ibid. : 494).

It follows from the above that Sarkar paid close attention to Herder's ideas of nation and nationality. He compared in his characteristic way Sivaji with the German thinker while praising the former's "linguistic patriotism." Countless words and phrases used in daily life had become "Persianized" in Sivaji's time on account of the long-standing Moslem influence. The Hindu king sought to 'Sanskritize' them. And, the *Raja-vyavaharakosha* (Dictionary of Royal Conduct) in Sanskrit prepared by Raghunath Pandit under his orders was a specimen of this attempt at linguistic remaking. Sivaji was thus "a champion of a culture." "As a nationalist, more precisely as an exponent of national language in politics Sivaji can claim recognition as one of the first among the modern makers of history, as a precursor of Herder (1744-1803) and Fitche (1702-1814)" (Sarkar, 1937 : 406). One of the great achievements of Sivaji lay in his "solicitude for

emancipating his countrymen from the thraldom of a foreign tongue" (*idem*).

The two paragraphs above suggest the implicit admiration of Sarkar for Herder and his ideas of cultural independence, national spirit, etc., and the influence of the same on the development of nationalistic feelings in the minds of the Bengalis and other Indians. Sarkar's appreciation of Herder and his ideas on nationalism was, however, a mixed one. Indeed, the mature Sarkar seriously controverted the logical and empirical validity of Herder's advocacy of the formation of nation-states on the basis of culture and / or language. His difference from Herder in this respect was based on a more fundamental disagreement between the two thinkers regarding their approaches towards human culture and society. Herder's work led to the expansion of those ideas which are generally called pre-romantic: the ideas of cultural differentiation of mankind, the spirit of the nation, the role of nations in history, and so on. His ideas contributed, Jerzy Szacki rightly points out, a lot to the development of modern historicism (1979 : 87-89).

Herder differed from the French *philosophes* on certain fundamental issues. (1) While generally agreeing to the pattern of science created by Newton, Herder abandoned the mechanistic vision of the world in favour of a vitalistic or organicist vision, which, of course, led to an essentially different interpretation of nature symbolized for him by the variety of life and not the uniformity of laws that govern it. (2) While subscribing to the ideas of progress of mankind, he revised their most popular versions, declaring himself against those who treated lightly the ideas of other epochs and against those thinkers who viewed mankind as a homogeneous whole or believed its gradual homogenization to be desirable. (3) Without undermining the very idea of reason he detailed its connection with the other faculties of man whom he regarded as the subject who acts, experiences, and expresses his personality and does not merely receive sensations and think.

Society is, according to Herder, not qualitatively different from the rest of the universe which is, in his ontological assumptions, a great organism in which everything is interconnected, following the working of an irrational vital force that penetrates every particle of nature. *It was not constructed like a machine but is an essentially a growing organism.* It is a whole composed of different and hence inter-dependent parts, the individuality of each of which is honoured throughout. Though the identity of the individual or particular group is never lost in Herder's conception of society, society is, in his view, the natural state of the individual. From the moment of his birth the individual is immersed in a community—family, tribe, nation, and the like. Herder considers nation (*volk*) the most important community. The nation is not so much an aggregate of people who live on a common territory and are subject to a set of uniform laws as it is a culture community shaped in the course of history and finding expression in its language. Language is the basic factor of identity of a nation : It expresses the character of the nation that survives as long as it can foster the traditions crystallized in language. Herder did not, however, ignore the importance of political organisation. Quite contrarily, he believed it to be natural. He treated, however, political organisation as secondary and as determined by cultural factors. Each nation-state derives its uniqueness from its unique circumstance, which include its geographical location, rather all forms of environment surrounding it, the customs and traditions of the community lying at its base and its interaction with other national communities,

In Herder's conception the nations remained integral parts of mankind which was to him a real entity. But the history of mankind is the history of the nations and is contained in the latter. He emphasised, therefore, a thorough understanding of the variety of historical events, the wealth of which determines the wealth of mankind. Every nation has its own measures of perfection and, hence, the measures developed

'by any particular nation may not be applicable to the others. Herder's *Reflections on the Philosophy of History* are, thus, concerned more with the plurality of facts in which the intentions of Providence materialize than with the uniformity of the laws of nature. It is only the general objectives of nature that are uniform. One would find a striking similarity between the ideas of Herder and the views of History held by Sarkar in his younger days and recorded by him in his essays like 'ইতিহাসের উপদেশ' 'The Lessons of history' (Sarkar, 1912 : 1-6). This view of history was, of course, rejected by Sarkar in his later years when he came to sharply criticise Herder's ideas of the national spirit or national soul and the unique cultural foundations of each nation-state.

Sarkar rightly discerned two fundamental elements of Herder's philosophy of nationalism. First, the German scholar harped on the idea of national soul ('জাতির...আঘা বা প্রাণ') —Sarkar in Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 73 ; 'জাতীয় চিন্তা' —Sarkar, 1942 : 485). Secondly, he talked of the distinctive features of each nationality or what he described as national identity ('জাতীয় বিশেষত্ব')—Sarkar, 1942 : 486). The national soul and the national identity are best articulated, according to Herder, in and through the national language. Herder prescribed, therefore, the formation of state on the bases of nationality, language and culture. Or, in other words, there should be as many states as there are languages. A multi-lingual state is thus inconceivable in Herder's political philosophy (Sarkar in Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 73).

By his own admission, Sarkar was initially deeply influenced by the ideas similar to Herder's Volksseele or Volksgeist. Though Herder was not a familiar name among the Bengalis or Indians during the days of the Swadeshi Movement, Herder's notions of the spirit of the nation or national soul and other similar ideas came to influence Sarkar and his peers through the works of other European writers and the studies about Bismark, Mazzini and Cavour (Sarkar, 1940 : 485-486). Ideas about the 'life of Bengal', the 'soul of India', the uniqueness of the Indian civilisation, the essential difference

between the east and the west, etc., were almost the axiomatic truths in the milieu of Sarkar at that time. But Sarkar's familiarity with the concern of the Hindus with mundane affairs as evidenced in the *Sukraniti* which he sought to translate in English sensitized him to the fundamental identity of the human mind across the civilisations in the east and the west. And since then he had opposed the ideas of national consciousness, the life of the nation or the collective soul which continued and accentuated certain unreal differences among the peoples of the two hemispheres or of different countries of the world (*ibid.* : 487).

The state is, in Sarkar's view, not a 'natural' organism but a mechanical conglomeration of domestic units, clan-communities, socio-economic trusts and *groupments professionnels*, partnerships, etc. It is, therefore, futile to seek any life or soul of the state (Sarkar in Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 73). "No innate motive force impels a race, language, religion or *Kultur* to embody itself in a staatal organization such as would be its characteristic expression The same culture may flourish under different states, while the same state may be associated with different culture-systems" (1938 · 11-12). Sarkar was overly eager, as it has been repeatedly noticed in this treatise, to demonstrate the equality of the Asians and the Euro-Americans in potentialities for political independence and material advancement through technological and scientific progress. It was, therefore, a compelling necessity for him to aver that humanity both in the east and in the west had moved along the same lines, though the tempo might have varied in different regions. "By the objective test and statistically considered, life's 'ideals' have been", he wrote. "the same the world over and almost all the ages through. In spite of the diversities of manifestation these ideals can be grouped under a single slogan, viz., the advancement of the happiness of human beings" (*ibid.* : 8). Thus, in sharp contradiction with Herder's doctrine of the impossibility as well as the undesirability of homogenisation of cultures Sarkar proclaimed the

fundamental uniformity of human collectivities all over the world and the trend towards and the desirability of the convergence of cultures. The physical and mental barriers separating different peoples and their cultures are crumbling down before the advancement of science and technology. "The tunnels, canals and bridges understood both literally and metaphorically are compelling the cultural institutions of the world to tend towards a closer and closer uniformity in the different quarters of the globe" (*idem*). The increasing economic interdependence of people in different parts of the globe and the growing sophistication of the techniques and instruments of modern warfare have rendered the idea of the state based on a single ethnic or cultural unit thoroughly obsolete, if such political units ever existed on earth. "Indeed the swan-song of linguistic or cultural nationalism is being sung in the battlefields of Europe today" (Sarkar, 1942 : 341).

The only strategic considerations in the formation of a nation-state are provided by the will or consent of some people to organise themselves into a nation-state and their ability to establish and maintain their political independence with viable military-naval-aerial strength. "Genetically therefore, nationality is, in essence, a militaristic concept" (Sarkar, 1938 : 16). At heart an Indian nationalist, Sarkar sought to counteract the view or suggestion, then continuously propagated by the foreign rulers with sinister designs, that the people of India, divided as they were in multiple and widely divergent ethnic, linguistic and religious groups, were incapable of attaining unity and organising themselves into a free nation. "Not unity, but independence is", he declared, "the distinctive feature of a national existence. The nation may thus represent one race or many. It may speak one language or many or it may be polyglot. It may be a uni-cultural or multi-cultural organism (*sic*). To an artificial corporation brought into being by the fiat of human creativeness homogeneity of racial or linguistic interests is not necessarily a source of strength, nor is

heterogeneity a special weakness" (*ibid.* : 21-22). Herder's view of national spirit or genius was thus categorically contradicted by Sarkar : "Nationality is not the concrete expression of a cult or culture or race or language, or of the Hegelian 'spirit' or genius of a people. It is the physical (territorial and human) embodiment of political freedom, maintained by economic or military strength" (*ibid.* : 21). Sarkar himself pointed out the paradoxical situation arising from his simultaneous appreciation and negative criticism of Herder's views (*Sarkar*, 1940 : 487).

Was Sarkar fully justified in his claim of having totally rejected Herder's notion of culture and his views about the uni-cultural foundation of every nation-state ? The question is raised because of the following reasons.

a) Sarkar was sceptical about the emergence of "a pan-Indian statehood" or the viability of a single nation-state in the "sub-continent" of India inhabited by diverse peoples after the withdrawal of the British army, navy and air-force from India.

b) He advocated the formation of two or three dozen nation-states in India. He had no clear idea of the basis of organisation of these nation-states save that he thought that the Assamese, the Bengalis, the Punjabis, the Marathis, the Madrasis, the people of the United Provinces were respectively capable of forming separate nation-states. In the absence of any other criterion, language would appear to be the foundation of each one of these separate nation-states.

c) Sarkar positively encouraged the formation of a separate nation-state by the Bengalis (*ibid.* 355) with, of course, a number of "non-Bengali" ethnic ("অবাঙ্গালী জাতি") and linguistic ("অবাঙ্গালী ভাষা") communities within it (*ibid.* : 366). He described himself as a Jeffersonian in this respect, (Sarkar in Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 518). It is true that Thomas Jefferson believed that the best government was that which governed least, and that this applied in particular to the Federal government (Parkes, 1970 : 154).

At the same time Sarkar remained silent over the fact

that Jefferson contributed to the emergence of the confederation of the U. S. A. which ultimately developed into a federal nation-state and he had acted, for two consecutive terms, as the President of the United States of America which sustained its independence and integrity as a nation in a landmass much larger in size than the territory of India and characterized by ethnic and racial diversities no less conspicuous than those of the Indian population. Was this silence bred by his sympathy with the idea of the uniqueness of Bengali culture and the claim of the Bengalis for a separate nation-state ?

Indeed, his ideas of Bengalicism or original Bengali culture as an important basis for the Bengali nation-state as well as his apprehension that the Central Government in Dominion India might be misled or obsessed by the "anti-Bengali sentiments and prejudices of certain quarters" (1949: 117) and his concern over the "anti-Bengali animus of non-Bengali publicists" (*ibid.* : 118) indicate Herder's undying influence on Sarkar.

Abdus Sadaque's view that "Bengali Hindus and Muslims constitute one nationality" was hailed by Sarkar (1942 : 330). Sarkar said that as a student of social science, he could not follow why it was considered utterly impossible for the Muslims as political animals to live with the Hindus as they had been living for ages in the "same linguistic, cultural and socio-economic *milieux*" (*ibid.* : 340). He rejected the two-nation theory of the Muslim League or any theory of religion forming the basis of organisation of state in Bengal or India not only because of the millennium-old processes of the "Muslimization of the Hindu as well as the Hinduization of the Muslim" (*ibid.* : 338) in India but because "Islam was conquered by Bengali creativity and became Bengalicized just like Hinduism and Buddhism" (*ibid.* : 58). According to him, "...the Mussalmans, like the Hindus have derived the manners and customs from a common source, namely the pre-Hindu and pre-Muslim Bengali 'birds, crows and pigeons', or pariahs of all denominations. It is *Bengalicism*,

the original culture and religions of the Bengali pariahs, that has conquered both Hinduism and Islam and has compelled both to get acculturated to the millennium-long mores, sanskaras, festivals, processions and folkways of the Bengali people" (*idem*; emphases added).

"Bengalicism" provided an illustration for Sarkar's theory of culture (see Ghoshal, 1957 : 69-71). Culture and Civilization are", wrote Sarkar. "synonymous and both imply nothing but creation. The creativities of men are born of the desire and the power to influence, command and dominate. Culture is, therefore, essentially a system of influences, conversions, conquests and dominations. Like every other culture Bengali culture is manifest, first in military and political enterprises, and secondly, in the arts and sciences, religions, morals, economic activities, social organisations, etc." (Sarkar, 1942 : 53). Each culture influences and is, by implication, influenced by other cultures. In his analysis of the society and culture in India as also in his explanation of culture-change Sarkar emphasized the fact of "acculturation i.e. the acceptance of the cultural, social and other *mores* of one group by another. The acculturation was in most instances mutual" (Sarkar, 1941 : 169-170 ; see also Ghosal, op. cit. : 71 Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 564-565). This capacity of the culture of a collectivity for influencing as well as accommodating the cultural elements of other communities proves its vitality. But the stress on the originality of the culture of a community or its power of influencing or changing the cultures of other collectivities or elements thereof is unmistakably present in Sarkar's definition of culture.

Indeed, he was proud of the "Bengali *genius* for conquering and dominating new cultural institutions and ideologies and establishing the empire of Bengalicism on all and sundry..." (1942 : 56, emphasis added). The "regional and social condition of Bengal" (*ibid.* : 55) bred the resilience of Bengali culture against Vedic Hinduism, Buddhism, and later Islam. Among the Hindus of Bengal the fundamental religion had ever been Bengalicism. "If at all, it

[i. e., Hinduism in Bengal] may be described as Bengalicized. Hinduism which is profoundly different from the Punjabi, Kanaujiya, Maratha, Tamil and other Hinduisms.....Bengalis worship their own creations, their own sentiments, emotions and activities" (ibid. : 60 ; emphasis added). The Bengali Mussalman, similarly, represents the parianization of Islam. "It is the Bengali words and phrases that embody in the main the devotion, spirituality and energism of the Bengali Hindus and Mussalmans" (ibid. : 61 , emphasis added). Bengalicism continues, according to Sarkar, to hold the ground in an unmistakable manner in the twentieth century also. When Sarkar asserted the "Bengali capacity for withstanding the foreign cultural influences and finally converting, dominating or Bengalicizing them" (ibid. : 62), did he not virtually accept Herder's thesis about the originality or uniqueness of a culture and ultimately his idea of the cultural and linguistic basis of the nation-state ? Sarkar's analysis of culture, more specifically, Bengali culture, and his demand for a Bengali state give the impression that he could not successfully deny that "the idea of the nation for its advocates stands in very intimate relation to 'prestige' interests..... The significance of the nation is usually anchored in the superiority, or at least the irreplaceability, of the culture values that are to be preserved and developed only through the cultivation of the peculiarity of the group" (Weber. 1978 : 925).

Herder's remarks about the distinguishing features of the religion, social organisation, and art of "Hindostan" were, it appears, totally neglected by Sarkar (cf. von Glasenapp, 1973 : 9-18). The German scholar explained the highest position of Brahmins in the caste hierarchy in terms of precedence of wisdom over strength and the monopolisation of all political wisdom by the priests. He admired the maintenance of the stability of the social organisation and inculcation of good habits and qualities in men by the institution of Brahmins or the caste order. But he was severely critical of its oppressive nature, the culmination of which was found in untouchability.

Sarkar, at heart a lover of Indian (Hindu) culture, rejoiced in his earlier days as also in the later years of his life over Nietzsche's assertion of superiority of Hinduism to Christianity in according dignity to human life on this earth. Herder too, Sarkar should have noticed, questioned the European Christians' claim of superiority of their religion and culture to those of the Indians. In his "Dialogues on the conversion of the Indians through our European Christians" in *Adrastea* No. 5, 1802, he challenged the propriety of the proselytizing efforts of the Christian missionaries in India and exposed the role of physical force underneath them. "I should think", argued the Asian in the said dialogues, "they [i.e., the Indians] should be allowed theirs ; their paradise for which they aspire through compassion, gentleness and good deeds, the heaven of nearness to God whom their people seek and worship in all that is good and beautiful....." (cited in von Glasenapp, op. cit. : 14).

A great admirer of the Indian art, Herder asserted that the taste that predominates in Indian monuments is extremely "local and national", so that they "have taken on a character entirely peculiar to them". Religion was the chief inspiration behind the foundation of these monuments as well as other works of art, e.g., the images of deities, etc. The main obstacle which confronted the art of the Indians was, paradoxically enough, "their religion, the very source of their art, and the organisation that developed out of it..... Everywhere one perceives that the symbolic allegory has overpowered art ; the latter obeyed the religious characterization and myth" (cited in von Glasenapp, op. cit. : 17). To understand the peculiarity of the Indian art one must, Herder insisted, understand the Indian philosophical system "which could arise only on the shores of the Ganges". Sarkar strongly believed in the uniformity of the art of the Hindus with the art of the Greeks and would have, therefore contradicted Herder's view of the uniqueness of the Indian art.

If he, however, given a little closer attention to the thinkers like Herder, Sarkar might have found that those thinkers

sought to highlight the peculiarities of the Indian society and culture not to demean it in any way but to show how the course of human civilisation and culture had different appearances in different climes, regions and epochs and the points of similarity in all these varied manifestations. "Just as the magnetic needle inclines", Herder wrote, "differently at different places on the earth, yet under fundamental laws, so also varies the imaginative power, taste, style of composition of peoples, and yet it is and remains everywhere the same mankind" (quoted in von Glasenapp, op. cit. : 18).

VI

Tönnies' ideas of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* formed the starting point of Sarkar's *Villages and Towns as Social Patterns* (1941), though Sarkar did not uncritically accept everything said by Tönnies. Tönnies' "epoch-making work," *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* proposed "the most radical dichotomies" in the analysis of human mind. He talked of two kinds of human will, the *wesenwille* which Sarkar translated as existential or natural will and *Kürwille* which Sarkar interpreted as chosen, arbitrary or artificial will. It is out of the natural will that the community arises. The society arises out of the chosen will. Social institutions take different forms in the community and the society. Toennies' dichotomy "has a time-value as well and represents two distinct and well-marked stages in evolution" (*ibid.* . 3). The epoch of the community which comes first is distinguished from the epoch of society. "According to Toennies the whole development is to be interpreted as the progressive tendency of urban life. He accepts the thesis of Marx to the effect that 'the entire economic history of society (i.e., of modern nations) is summarized in the moment of anti-thesis between town and country'" (*ibid.* : 3-4). And, Sarkar noticed that the rural-urban dichotomy of Toennies and Marx is one of the chief topics of interest in Spengler's *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*. Also, in *The Decline of the West* (Vol. II, London, 1928 : 91-92) Spengler declared that

"The man of the land and the man of the city are different essences." As compared with the treatises of Spengler, Toennies' work appeared to Sarkar "rigidly factual and scientific and thoroughly analytical" (Sarkar, op. cit. : 4).

Sarkar appears here to have accepted the distinction between community and society or between rural and urban worlds. "The objective differences between villages and towns are," he declared, "profound realities" (ibid. : 5). The rural-urban differences, carried to their logical extremities, are expressed in the rural-urban antithesis or dichotomy. "Such dichotomies are," observed Sarkar, ingeniously enough, "to be encountered in a radical form in Indian ideology also." Following the suggestions in *Vaishnaver Bhagaban* (The God of the Vaishnavas, 1936) by Radha Binod Saha, a Bengali author, Sarkar discovered an awareness of the contrasts between the village and the metropolis in the Sanskrit epic, the *Mahabharata*. "There Vrindavan is the village, and Dwaraka the city, the capital, the 'cosmopolis'. Krishna is placed in the two *milieux* in two different roles, the cowboy and the king, and his orientations to the social complex are as diverse as imaginable. The antithesis, Vrindavan-Dwaraka, appears almost to be the Toenniesian dichotomy, *Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft*" (ibid. : 6)

It is interesting to note how Sarkar used the Indian categories of *Prakriti* and *Sanskara* or *Sanskrita* to depict the indigenous ideas of rural-urban contrast. Vrindavan "is a bit of *Prakriti* or nature, so to say. It is natural, growing out of the Mother Earth, marked by simplicity of feelings and spontaneity of activities. The atmosphere here is of the landscapes, farms and forests. The scene is rural or sylvan, the actors are peasants, cowherds, pariahs. On the contrary, Dwaraka is the offshoot of men's *sanskara*, i.e., influence on Nature The atmosphere here is that of landscapes trained and pruned, of brick and mortar, rather than of cosy green surroundings. The scene is urban and stony, the actors are courtiers, officers, sophisticated men and women. Contrasted with the pariahs of Vrindavan the men and women at Dwaraka

are the reformed, *sanskrita*, cultivated or cultured persons, the Aryans, so to say, in the literal philological sense" (*idem*).

Thus, the contrast between village and town is related to that between prakrit languages and Sanskrit in Indian Philology. "Literally, the Prakrits are the primordial and fundamental tongues. Sanskrit is the artificially cultivated or scientifically built up" (*idem*). The literature and culture in the *Prakrit* languages may then be regarded "as typifying... the spirit of Vrindavan, folklife, village, community, *Gemeinschaft*. On the other hand, the literature and culture in Sanskrit may be said to represent the soul of Dwaraka, courtlife, contract and commerce, town society, *Gesellschaft*. Philologically and culturally the dichotomy, Prakrit-Sanskrit, like the dichotomy, Parian-Aryan, can within certain limits be assimilated in a general manner to the rural-urban dichotomy " (*ibid.* : 7).

It would not be an exaggeration, if one suggests that the analysis above contains the rudiments of the line of inquiry proposed by Milton Singer regarding the nature of interaction of what they term Great Tradition and Little Tradition of India. For, Sarkar believed in "social continuities and assimilations" between the urbanities and the rural folk. And, secondly, he continuously emphasized the folk-elements in Hindu-culture and what he described as Parianization of the Aryan and the Aryanization of the Parian. Sarkar observed, as an example of the preceding process, the working of two entirely different sets of institutions in the marriage ceremonies of Hindu India from one extreme of the subcontinent to the other. "The first are the Vedic ideas and rites. These furnish the unifying all-Indian forces. The other ideas and rites come from the myriads of local, ethnic and other groups in the thousand and one villages of India" (1941 : 188). This is why the Kashmiri and Bengali Brahmins as well as "the Andhras, Deccanis and Cholas of Southern India" share unities and identities and at the same time observe differences in their marital and other practices. The

Radha-Krishna songs or the Krishna-Kirtan songs, dear to the Vaishnavas, are an embodiment of the creative genius as much of the inferior castes including the untouchables as of the higher castes. "The parianization of the Aryan and Prakritization of Sanskrit, on the one hand, as well as the Aryanization of the parian and Sanskrization of the Prakrit, *the two wings of the mutual acculturation or reciprocal culture-conquest,—are embodied in these Vaishnava songs and dances*" (ibid. : 189 ; emphasis added).

Sarkar's insightful hints at the Indian ideas and values regarding the rural-urban dichotomy or rural-urban continuum or the mutual impact of the Great Tradition and the Little Tradition on each other ever remained as hints only ; they were never developed. Sarkar, impatient as he was with any effort at dichotomizing societies or cultures, immediately came to attack the "dichotomy" of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* on several grounds. First, Toennies' attempt at "epochification" or demarcating the epoch of *Gesellschaft* from the previous epoch of *Gemeinschaft* tended to "overlook, ignore or minimize the continuity, permanence and uniformity of some of the processes in the *charaveti* (march on) of man's will to live and flourish, to influence, to conquer and to dominate" (ibid. : 7). Second, it suggested an obsession with the *Zeitgeist* which tended to neglect the profound identities and similarities between any two epochs or sub-epochs in spite of the ostensible variations and diversities. Third, "whenever the psycho-social personality manifests itself in more or less the same processes and patterns in the town-category as well as the village-category, the identity, equalization or similarity of the two categories is by all means to be admitted as a socio-scientific fact" (ibid. : 11). The last observation may immediately bring to the reader's mind the views of D. F. Pocock that there is no dichotomy in India between the village and the traditional city as both are elements of the same civilization and that religion, caste and kinship are the bases of social organization in both villages and towns (cf. Pocock, 1960). But the

apparent similarity between the views of Sarkar and Pocock should not blind us regarding the basic difference in their approaches to the problem. Pocock emphasised the specificity of the Indian situation. "It would appear impossible", wrote he, "to recognize the 'orthogenetic' character of Indian cities and villages and at the same time to think of comparing them separately with their 'equivalents' elsewhere" (*ibid.* : 81). And this proposition of uniqueness of the Indian situation irked Sarkar most. He apprehended that the dichotomy of rural and urban would be translated into the one of traditional and modern India because of her predominantly rural population would be dubbed traditional and hence qualitatively different from the urban and modern west. He did not try to hide this anxiety. For example, while he everywhere noticed that it is the moneyed man that controls the affairs in society and is the dictator of morals and religion and can buy the conscience and dignity of individuals, he wonders whether "this type of social Gestalt is to be described exclusively as modern, capitalistic, bourgeois, urban or Western. Curiously enough, even among scientific thinkers, sociologists and philosophers in Euro-America as well as Asia there is a tendency to differentiate this social pattern from that prevailing in ancient and medieval conditions, pre-capitalistic stages, un-bourgeois societies, rural areas and the Orient" (*ibid.* : 20). He expressed the hope that an "analytical sociology dealing in an inductive manner—on the basis of statistical data wherever possible—with predominantly agricultural, semi-medieval, half-developed countries like India, China, Iran, Latin America" would demolish the "metaphysical dichotomy-psychologies, dichotomy-sociologies" as exemplified in the antithesis of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* or village and town.

Villages and towns differ, Sarkar averred, "but in the number of inhabitants and the density of population per square mile. It is ultimately this numerical difference that accounts for the rural-urban differentiation in personality

and inter-human relations in so far and to the extent that it is a statistical reality" (*ibid.* 16). Either of them bears the evidence of remaking of the natural (physical) milieu and inter-human (social) relations by the creative intelligence and will of man. Human creativity has ever sought to provide the villages with the same amenities as are available in the towns. Indeed, the difference or lag between a village and a town may be traced to the absence of resources belonging to the entire people. It is often forgotten, Sarkar alleged, that "Eur-America is not by tradition urban. Her tradition in this respect is identical with Asia's... [It is not] possible to differentiate East and West on the question of village vs. town. Historically speaking, again, towns are to be found in the East. The distinction between East and West is a myth so far as rural-urban ideologies are concerned" (*ibid.* : 21-22). The absence of urban development in India or in Asia as a whole may be explained by the fact of her continued subjugation by the foreign powers. "In the case of abnormal phenomena like politically subject peoples", wrote the inveterate nationalist, "the ruling races may deliberately or unconsciously decide to keep the dependants in a condition of perpetual tutelage, so as to maintain a socio-cultural or economic lag of two or three generations between the rulers and the ruled. In the equation of comparative social progress the subject races are therefore likely to exhibit the marks of primitivity, medievalism, obscurantist irrationality for much longer periods than the politically free races. The processes of mutual acculturation and assimilation between villages and towns may therefore be obstructed under these abnormal conditions" (*ibid.* 17). Is not there an acceptance of the equation between backwardness, obscurantism and irrationality on the one hand and rural world on the other in the above statement? Does it not equate urbanism with rationality and progress? Did, then Sarkar accept the difference between villages and towns? Did he suggest like Mukherjee that though "the concept of rural-urban dichotomy or rural-urban continuum need not be meaningful in the

context of urbanization and social transformation [in India] at the moment" (Mukherjee, 1965 : 48), rural-urban differences are there and would surface with the pace of acceleration of socio-economic development and structural change in the Indian society ? It is difficult to find in Sarkar's writings a positive answer to the question. He observed in one place, "It is not possible to say that urban reconstruction differs from rural reconstruction. Virtually the same schemes or projects [in relation to 'equipment and paraphernalia, hygienic, economic, cultural and political' —Sarkar, 1941 : 23] apply to both... In the last analysis it is the annihilation of the villages that is the aim and objective of the rural reconstruction ideology" (Sarkar, 1941 : 22-23 ; parenthesis added). A little later he asserted, "The existence of the alleged rural features in the mentality, attitudes and reactions of the townspeople should... be a first postulate according to this analysis of psyche [i.e.. the analysis guided "by the conception of pluralistic *Gestalt* of the mind"] (ibid. : 25 ; parenthesis add).

In the absence of any positive evidence that the ratio of crimes and criminals in relation to the total volume of activities and business and the total population is higher in the urban areas than in the villages, and in view of the continuous process of give-and-take between rural and urban cultures and artforms and rurbanization, Sarkar questioned the validity and utility of the notions of dichotomies of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* or of *Wesenwille* and *Kürwille*. He criticised Toennies' *Kritik der öffentlichen Meinung* (Criticism of Public Opinion) because of the distinction it proposed between the opinion of the bourgeoisie and that of the volk (people). Indeed, in *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* also Toennies made "a contrast between a social order which, being based upon consensus of wills, rests on harmony and is developed and ennobled by folkways, mores and religion, and an order which, being based upon a union of rational wills, rests on convention and agreement ... and finds its ideological justification in public opinion" (1974 : 261). He described public

opinion to be "primarily directed towards the life and relationship of *Gesellschaft* and state" (*ibid.* : 255). This view was unacceptable to Sarkar. He supported Bauer who described public opinion as the general opinion of a more or less broad group in a society and as a timeless, i.e., an eternally valid category. "The psychology which seeks to establish the category, public opinion, on only one of its forms and dismiss the others as pre-public opinion is," wrote Sarkar, "as unjustifiable as that of Lévy-Bruhl, who in *L'Ame primitive*" reserved the category "religious" for the modern peoples and described the ancients and primitives as pre-religious, and in *Les Fonctions mentales dans les societe's inférieures* (1910) and *La Mentalité primitive* (1922) talked of the dichotomy between the pre-logical primitives and the logical moderns. "The continuity of mental evolution is ignored in both these dichotomy-psychologies. And of course both deny virtually the complexity of the mental *Gestalt* at every stage of human existence" (*ibid.* : 11).

It may be necessary, Sarkar admitted, in science to distinguish diverse forms of social life from one another for logical analysis and psychological precision. It is equally desirable to earmark the categories for certain well defined and precisely delimited phenomena. But the social scientists and the system-makers in philosophy are often "so much obsessed by their exclusive type theories that...they virtually forget...[the pluralistic make-up of mind or personality" and "the existence of the pluralistic pattern"] while they develop their age-spirits, epochal characteristics or dominant culture traits" (*ibid.* : 25). But the actual social situations are complex as they cannot be comprehended in terms of either *Gemeinschaft* or *Gesellschaft*, taken exclusively. Again, the continuous movement of human history makes it difficult to classify or characterize different historical periods exclusively in terms of any specific attributes and attainments of human mind and human will, since human mind in any period of history will evince qualities which may be found to have characterized human psyche in other periods or ages. The dichotomy of

intuition-intellect, intuition-experience (Bergson), instinct-experience, reason-unreason, logical-illogical, rational-irrational, does not explain the complete individual. If one likes to use the categories of Toennies, one has "to visualize the living human mind in the following equation :

Gestalt of individuality

$$= \text{Wesenwillen}^x \times \text{Kuerwillen}^y$$

$$= \text{Natural will}^x \times \text{Chosen will}^y \quad (\text{ibid. : 24})$$

It implies that no individual is characterized exclusively by the one or the other. Certain doses (x) of the natural will are mixed up with certain doses (y) of the chosen will. Sarkar, an advocate of pluralism in social and psychological analyses came to "believe in the normal *Gestalt* as the complex of more than one category, instinct, intuition, intellect, reason, logic, *Wesenwillen*, *Kuerwillen*, emotion, passion, unreason, irrationality, pre-logic, pre-religion, and what not functioning simultaneously" (ibid. : 25).

A few words can and should be said in favour of Toennies. In Section 25 of Book II of his famous work, Toennies himself admitted that his concepts of the forms of will, as free and arbitrary products of thinking, are mutually exclusive ; "rational will and natural will are strictly separate entities" (1974 : 162). In the same breath he added, "Observation and inference will easily show that no natural will can ever occur empirically without rational will by which it finds its expression, and no rational will without natural will on which it is based" (*idem*). What is, then, the importance of the rigorous distinction ? The strict distinction between these "normal" concepts "enables us to discern the existing empirical tendencies toward the one or the other" (*idem*). Almost in the vein of Max Weber's advocacy of his 'ideal types', Toennies wrote, "The great qualitative variety of human willing is made comparable by relating it to these normal concepts as common denominators" (*idem*). One may conceptually differentiate rational action from emotional action. Though in reality actions may involve certain degrees of both reason and emotion, the element of rationality may be more preponderant

than the element of emotion in a particular situation while in another situation the case may be quite the reverse. If rational action is desired, attempt may have to be made to keep emotions in check. Sarkar's dichotomy-phobia led him away from a sympathetic consideration of the conceptual devices like those of Toennies. He always feared that the dichotomies proposed would ultimately develop into stereotypes declaring western societies to be qualitatively different from the oriental societies which would almost invariably be depicted as traditional, agricultural, and backward in all spheres of material action. His rejection of Toennies' dichotomies of *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft* might have emanated from the fear that any typology of human nature would result into the characterization of the men in the west as rational and capable of success in industrial and technological advancement and description of the men in the industrially and technologically backward east as irrational and guided by prejudices and superstitions, blind allegiance to tradition, and other-worldly considerations. Hence he hastened to add in his critique of Toennies that "Man is generally taken to be a rational, reasonable or logical animal. But it should be untrue to reality to believe that the rational, the reasonable or the logical in man has crushed the irrational, the unreasonable or the illogical in himself out of existence. The unreasonable, illogical and irrational features of his personality are coexisting in the same *Gestalt* with the opposites as a psychical fact" (*ibid.* : 24). Probably, a corroboration of this view of human nature was found by him in the writings of Pareto whom he mentioned on quite a few occasions in his books.

CHAPTER V

EXPLORING SOCIOLOGY (II)

In his "Miscellany" in the *Calcutta Review* of April, 1939, which he repeated in *The Political Philosophies Since 1905* Vol. II, Part III (1942 : 204-205), Sarkar very briefly described Karl Mannheim's contribution to the field of Sociology of Knowledge. His penchant for discovering similarities led him *en passant* to compare Mannheim's "ideology" and "utopia" with the "residues" of Pareto. The "ideological ideas" offer, in Sarkar's understanding, a defence of the *status quo* whereas the element of "wish-image" or "wish-dream" in utopia seeks to transform the existing order. "In so far as Pareto's second residue,—the residue of group-persistence,—is statical and promotes inertia it may be associated with Mannheim's 'ideology'. His 'utopia' can then be linked up with the first residue of Pareto, namely, the residue of combination, which is the active, creative or innovative element in social dynamics" (1942 : 105).

The votary of freedom and democracy in Sarkar was realistic enough to see the ever present element of "despotocracy" or dictatorship alongside the craving for and the fact of liberty and personal freedom in all political configurations. There has been no unalloyed democracy or despotism in any country or period in history ; what exists in reality is "demo-despotocracy" in one form or another. In defence of this view Sarkar approvingly cited Karl Mannheim's observation in *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction* that man has in modern times come to accept of necessity "planning for freedom", "coordination of social and psychological techniques", "replacement of the traditional principle of *laissez faire*" by that of social control (Sarkar, 1942 : 302).

Sarkar referred again to Karl Mannheim in his discussion of the positive role of intellectuals "in all revolutions or

progress movements" (1941 : 122-124) as also in disseminating values in human societies (1942 : 30-32).

He quoted the views of Alfred Weber, Karl Mannheim, Arnost Blaha on the creative and class-transcendent character of the intellectuals (1941 : 123-124 ; 1942 : 30-31). Taking his cue from Weber and Mannheim, Blaha "served to develop on new foundations what may be described as the old Hindu conception of the Brahman as, theoretically considered, the embodiment of creative qualities and social leadership" (Sarkar, 1941 : 124). Elsewhere Sarkar wrote, "In Blaha's doctrine of intellectuals we encounter once more perhaps the theory of Brahmanocracy, the aristocracy of character and spiritual qualities as developed by the Hindus in their socio-logical texts,—the *Dharma*—, *Artha*—, and *Niti-Sastras*,—without, however, the hereditary determinism associated with the Hindu caste system" (1942 : 31). Here is an interesting example of Sarkar's strong inclination for finding out the parallels of features of the Hindu social and cultural order in the most widely divergent socio-cultural systems. He appears in such cases to have underplayed the fact that the element of "hereditary determinism" of the Hindu caste system made it and, therefore, the role of Brahmans in it, strikingly different from many other systems of social stratification and the role of intellectual leaders in the same.

"Blaha, like Weber and Mannheim, stresses", Sarkar pointed out, "the fact that the intellectuals do not form any special economic category" (1941 : 124) The attitude betrayed in the overemphasis on the fact appeared to Sarkar "too non-economic or anti-Marxist". True, economic forces are by no means the only forces in the world as some "Marxists" are wont to believe. But economic agencies do constitute important social forces. 'To combat [the] fallacy of [the Marxists] the psychologist does not have to commit the analogous and opposite fallacy of excluding the economic forces altogether. This theory about the extra-economic position of the *elite*, the Brahman or the intellectual is exposing itself to the fallacy of intellectual *advaitism* (monism)" (*idem*).

II

"In Pareto's sociological analysis the scientific world has", wrote Sarkar, "got a powerful corrective to the much too facilely accepted roseate view of the human nature. No sociology can be real and adequate which ignores the knaves and scoundrels of the world in its study and is obsessed by the saints and sages. The social reality is brought out prominently in the Paretian investigations. They are based on the fundamental proposition that the human *psyche* is the field for the tug of war between the Devil and the Divinity. The *dvandas* or conflicts constitute the eternal make-up of the mental and moral personality. The role of the irrational is no less constructive than that of reason. In Pareto one may, therefore, easily discover the dictum of Manu who observed that *durlabho hi suchirnarah* (rare is the man that is good by nature)" (1942 : 28-29). With the preceding statement Sarkar concluded his brief appreciation of Pareto's ideas. It provides a noteworthy example of Sarkar's eclectic way of picking up the particular ideas from the ensemble of thoughts of a particular sociologist or social thinker which would support the ideas he cherished dear and also of his method of comparing the ideas of the Indian and Western thinkers. Pareto's *Trattato di Sociologia Generale* and the view of human nature contained therein had been referred to by Sarkar also in an earlier work (1928 : 279). But Sarkar's critical summary of the economic and sociological ideas of the Italian master in *Ekaler Dhanadaulat* is more interesting not merely because it is a little more elaborate but it seeks to explain why Pareto's ideas were favourite with the Fascists.

Pareto emphasised, noted Sarkar, that the interdependence of multiple forces in the economic world was intelligible with the help of the concept of equilibrium of various forces and, therefore, with the systematic application of the principles of mathematics, physics and mechanics. Man and his life in society was far too extensive to be exhaustively studied by economics alone. Economics viewed man as a rational animal. But in human psyche irrational, illogical forces

are as strong as, if not stronger than, the rational and logical ones. Hence, to get a complete picture of man and his behaviour in the actual world a new science, viz., sociology, was necessary. Sarkar presented in Bengali these basic ideas of Pareto with admirable lucidity.

The first reason why the Fascists liked Pareto was that the Italian thinker believed in the inherent differences and inequalities of men. Strivings for autonomy, freedom or equality would ultimately prove abortive, since the equality which might be attained after a long struggle would be shortlived and soon replaced by a new form of inequality. The fascists liked this gospel of ubiquity of inequality.

The other reason why the fascists considered Pareto's sociology the spiritual foundation (আংশিক বনিয়াদ) of fascism was that they found in it a certain kind of moral support to their deployment of every measure including the most ruthless ones for perpetuating their power. Was it possible, inquired Pareto, for a ruling group to maintain itself in power against the perpetual threats coming from the sections striving for power or upward social mobility ? “ ঐতিহাসিক দ্রষ্টান্তের সাহায্যে পারেন্ড বলিংভুচ্ছা,—‘আলবৎ সম্ভব। কম্ব’কৌশল সুবিদিত। বিপক্ষকে সবৎশে নিধন করা হইয়া থাকে। গোলমেলে লোকগুলাকে জেলে পাঠানো আৱ এক কায়দ। ঘূৰ দিয়া শত্ৰু বা প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বীকে রাখিতে চেষ্টা কৰা হয়। আৱ নীচু স্তৱের ভিতৱ্বকার ডানপটে বা ঢাঁড় ও নেতৃস্থানীয় লোকগুলাকে উঁচু স্তৱের লোকেবা খানিকটা ঠেলিয়া তৃলিয়া তাহাদেৱ তোয়াজ কৱে। এই সকল কম্ব’কৌশল কামে কৰিলে ধনতন্ত্র আৰু পক্ষ কৰিতে সমর্থ হয়। মিথিগুখে স্বাধীনতা, স্বৰাজ, সাম্য ইত্যাদিৰ বোলচাল ঝাড়তে যাহারা অভাস্ত তাহারা বেশী দিন মাথা খাড় রাখিতে পাৱেনা। তাহাদেৱ পতন ঠেকাইয়া রাখা অসম্ভব। চিৱকালই শক্তিযোগী, দণ্ডো ও বন্ধুটে লোকেৱা ছলে-বলে-কৌশলে নীচু শ্রবণ হইতে উঠিয়া উঁচু শ্রবণ দখল কৰিয়া বসিয়াছে। বত’মানেও তাহা সম্ভব। ভাৰিব্যতেও তাহা ঘটিবে।’ এই হইল পাৱেত’ৰ সমাজদৰ্শনেৱ এক কাঁচা। বত’মানে মুসলিম-ৱাজ পাৱেতকে শক্তিযোগেৱ দাশৰ্ণিক বৰ্লিয়া তাৰিফ কৰিতেছে।” That is, “Pareto observes, citing examples from history,

'Certainly, it is. The tactics are well-known. The opposition is exterminated *en masse*. Incarceration of the trouble-makers, actual or suspected, is another technique. Bribery may be resorted to in order to checkmate the enemies or competitors. And, then, the higher echelons in the power structure try to coax and cajole the dare-devil, the naughty, the wild or leading elements of the lower strata by granting them a small rise in status, income or power. Capitalism can defend itself through these tricks and tactics. Those who depend on sweet words and preach liberty, autonomy or independence, equality cannot survive for long. Their downfall is inevitable. The cunning and dare-devil seekers of power have always been successful in climbing up the social ladder and capturing the positions in higher strata. And, it may happen again at present as well as in future.' One may have in these ideas, a glimpse of Pareto's social philosophy..... The current regime of Mussolini hails Pareto as the philosopher of force or power" (Sarkar, 1935 : 395 , the author's translation).

Sarkar himself had a great admiration for Pareto's dispassionate, rather, hard-headed, analysis of the different aspects of the socio-economic reality and his rejection of any mono-causal explanation of human psyche or society. The manner in which he referred here and there in his writings to the views of the Italian sociologist may, of course, appear unconventional. For example, while highlighting this-worldly, materialistic or "positivistic", secular elements of the Hindu culture and civilization in refutation of the traditional indology emphasizing only the other-worldly ideas of the Hindus, Sarkar warned against an extreme obsession with the ideas and achievements of the Hindus in mundane affairs only. The total exclusion of the idealistic, spiritual and religious facts in any explanation of the Hindu culture would be as one-sided and misleading as the historical materialism or economic interpretation of Karl Marx or Achille Loria "Dualism or rather pluralism is, on the contrary, the key to the appropriate methodology in the interpretation of *visva-sakti* or world forces. The position of

Pareto in his *Trattato di Sociologia Generale* (Florence, 1916, Vol. I. p. 426, Vol. II. pp. 276-277 ; also *Manuel d' Economie Politique* (Paris, 1902) pp. 18-19.....) in this regard is acceptable" (Sarkar, 1937 : 67), Historical materialism, Pareto felt, correctly pointed out the "contingential character" of the moral and religious and other similar phenomena. It also rightly emphasized the inter-dependence of economic and other social phenomena. "But the error lies in changing this inter-dependence into a relation of cause and effect" (*idem*). Equally acceptable is, Sarkar maintained, another Paretian viewpoint that economic as well as extra-economic values, ideas and actions of man will have to be considered in an examination of the complete personality. "In regard to scientific purposes, again, says, Pareto, it is possible to be 'analytical' but *la pratica è essenzialmente sintetica* (practice is essentially synthetic)" (*ibid.* : 68) And, Sarkar's immediate comment was, "It is the synthetic view that one ought to stand for, and as one can claim, is the factual reality of Indian history and Hindu culture" (*idem*).

Sarkar discerned some rudiments of socialism in the activities initiated or launched by the municipalities and towns in India for the collective well-being of the urban population. He maintained at the same time that the bourgeoisie including the petit bourgeoisie of different types made large profits, in fair or unfair ways, out of these programmes launched by the municipalities. He referred in this connection to Pareto's analysis of the "bourgeois character of the municipal socialism" in the west. The following citation from *Les Systems Socialistes* was offered : "It must be noted that it is the so-called conservative parties that are interested in organizing municipal socialism. The reason is that a party of the bourgeoisie enjoys the direct or indirect profits" (cited in Sarkar, 1941 : 133). Having noted the various unfair means which the members of the bourgeoisie and their associates allegedly adopted in the aforementioned account by Pareto, Sarkar commented, "This process or 'action pattern' is universal and has been functioning in India as well. The bourgeois interests

are quite prominent in the Indian cosmopolises and towns as well as village patterns" (1941 : 133). India was thus placed in a similar position with that of the rest of the world. In fact, Sarkar mentioned the observations of one of the Mayors of the Calcutta Corporation regarding the wide-spread prevalence of bribery and favouritism in the nexus of the Calcutta Corporation. The mayor found similar conditions elsewhere both in the east and in the west. "This does not remove the reproach but it demonstrates at any rate the silliness of the idea that India is more moral and spiritual than Eur-America. The Mayor's observations about the Corporation of Calcutta are applicable virtually to every public institution throughout India, rural or urban, state-controlled or private ..." (ibid : 134). This is how Sarkar utilised the Paretian analysis of the nature of "spoliation" (cf. Pareto in Finer (ed.) 1976 : 137-141) in bourgeois socialism.

Sarkar was terribly impressed by Pareto's relentless exposure of the vices of bourgeois culture and civilisation (Sarkar, 1941 : 92-93). He accepted Pareto's suggestion that a governing class, whatever might be its character, would always seek to perpetuate its control through chicanery, fraud, corruption, outright purchase of the leaders of the subject classes ; his views regarding the essentially oligarchic character of all forms of government including the democratic one ; and also his conclusion regarding the universality of corruption in democratic as well as absolutist systems of social and political organisation. "Such are", commented Sarkar, "some of the *brutally sincere conclusions* of Pareto's sociology which 'without disparagement of any of these estimable sociologies', metaphysical, positive, humanitarian (Comte, Spencer, De Greef, Letourneau), is 'purely experimental, after the fashion of chemistry, physics and other such sciences' (Vol. I [T.S.G.], section 6)" (1942 : 28).

Of all the ideas and theories of Pareto, his theory of the circulation of elites was most liked and most frequently referred to by Sarkar. It helped him explain the social mobility in the Indian social structure through time. A careful

perusal of the Indian political history would reveal, according to Sarkar, the following data : (a) Culture-contact as an element in social mobility or social mobility as an element of culture contact had time and again broken down India's isolation and led to many changes in her social and political organisation. (b) The people experienced transformations in economic, political and social stratification throughout the ages and regions. (c) Intermixture of races and fusion of castes had been almost a perennial feature of the entire process of family-, community- or society-making through the ages. (d) Finally, the allegedly "lower" races or castes and the alleged "outsiders", i. e., non-Aryans, non-Hindus, etc., had never faced a total denial of "access to the 'upper ten thousands' in blood, ritual, wealth and political power" (Sarkar, 1937 : 134).

The above facts of the "Hindu culture and politics" well illustrate the doctrines of Pareto in *Les Systèmes Socialistes* (1902) and *Trattato di Sociologia Generale*, (1916). Every society is, in Paretian sociology, characterised by a fundamental distinction between the upper and lower socio-economic orders and the concomitant preponderance of the elites or dominant classes. But the elites are vulnerable to the tendency towards physical and moral degeneration, decay and disappearance. The elites ruling at one point of time are ultimately replaced by the newly dominant classes such as emerge out of the people. "Sociologically, Pareto never detects the government of societies in a democratic manner. The course is from aristocracy to aristocracy" (Sarkar, 1937 : 134). The endless series of rise and fall of ruling dynasties or coteries in India and elsewhere corroborates to an extent Pareto's doctrine of circulation of elites. "We need not, however," Sarkar hastened to add, "be hundred per cent Paretian and admit that the elites of one generation or culture are entirely replaced by those of the next. The emergence of new elements from the lower orders is a reality." (*idem*).

The army proved, according to Sarkar, to be one of the most important "social ladders" for the virile and enterprising

elements from among the lower strata of the Indian society. These new elements from the lower orders always found chances "of getting admitted into and fused or mixed up with the already existing dominant classes "because of military, political, economic, sexual and other circumstances". "A new 'metabolism' is all the time in action giving rise to a new *Gestalt*, form or complex in social relationships. It is these intermixtures that enable the transition from generation to generation of *elites* to appear not as an abrupt breach with the past or the total replacement of old social 'physiognomy' by the new, but as a generally steady although revolutionary process of societal transformation. Thus considered, the historical movements, the social mobilities, the dynamic processes, the *charaiveti* activities ought really to be described as the continuous democratizations of world-culture through the rise of the lower and their absorption into the *elites* rather than as marches from aristocracy to aristocracy" (*idem*).

What an ingenious interpretation of Pareto's doctrine! His thesis of "circulation of *elites*" was utilized by Sarkar to explain the process of "democratization" of the ruling strata throughout the Indian history resulting from the upward mobility of the members of the lower orders and the acquisition of wealth, power and prestige by them. This radically revised version of Pareto's thesis was applied by Sarkar not only to strike down the myth of a static social order of India of the yore but to explain the changes in the Indian social structure in his times. He discerned the beginnings of what is called today "compensatory or protective discrimination" in the special concessions granted to some low castes and communities by the Government of India Acts of 1921 and 1935. The state patronage would, he hoped, pave the way for upward social mobility of the lower social categories. The higher positions in the socio-economic order would no longer remain the monopoly of the *elites* belonging to the higher castes and classes but partially go over to the members of the lower orders. Through the emergence of these *elites* by

cooption and the correponding diminution in the power and wealth of the high caste and upper class elites, a process akin to the circulation of elites would begin to work in the Indian society. But, the "social metabolism that is taking place in India on account of the state's favours being deliberately showered on the non-higher classes and castes is to be sharply distinguished from the Paretian metabolism or circulation because this latter is caused by the physical, intellectual and moral degeneracy of the existing elites or aristocracies" (1941 : 179).

Finally, Sarkar read in the Paretian thesis about aristocracies or elites a message of hope for the people of countries colonised by the imperial powers. He accepted the opinion of Pareto in T.S.G. that imperialism is not necessarily a class phenomenon. "It is the domination of one *people* by another *people*. It is racial or national in fundamentals" (Sarkar, 1941 : 546). As a member of a subject race, Sarkar had always felt tormented by the indignities inflicted by the imperial masters on the colonized people. Hence, he appreciated and declared, "So far as the subject races or colonial races in Eur-America as in Asia and Africa are concerned, nothing but de-imperialization and decolonization can satisfy their moral or spiritual urges" (ibid : 557).

De-imperialisation appeared to be "quite far off" at the end of the third decade of the century. But Sarkar did not despair. For, "What Pareto (1848-1923) maintains about the higher classes, the elites or aristocracies in a national group is valid about ruling races in the international pattern. 'Aristocracies,' says he 'do not last. Whatever the causes, it is an incontestable fact that after a certain length of time they pass away. History is a graveyard of aristocracies'" (ibid : 556). The aristocracies decay not only in number but also in quality in the sense that they lose their vigour, or, to use Paretian terms, there is a decline "in the proportion of residues which enabled them to win their power and to hold it" (cited in Sarkar, loc. cit.). In the same manner, Sarkar pointed out, the members of the ruling and imperialist

races suffer the irreversible process of moral and physical enfeeblement.

The members of an imperialist race become dependent, during their stay in the colonies, on a vast *entourage* of cooks and servants of various kinds even for their most ordinary physical requirements of daily life. These cooks and servants and bearers come from the subject races. And, gradually, the entire subject race comes to be regarded by the ruling people as a race of menial servants. Naturally, the men and women of the ruling race fail to recognise the basic human dignity of the subject people. "Once used to dealing with human beings as servants, the rulers sub-consciously treat their own kith and kin as servants. The colonialist pathology does not leave them when they leave the colonies." They carry it along with them in their dealings not only with the rest of their own societies but also with all the races who are their political-imperial equals or rivals. Their "superiority neurosis" and the attendant nervousness breed disaffection in their fellow country-men and hostility in the minds of the other races. Their home is thus imperilled both from within and from without. Their avoidance of manual labour and their physical lethargy which arise from their dependence on the servants from the subject races for all activities involving physical labour, indulgence by them in luxuries and vices, their complacency with the measures of internal security and external defence adopted by them at a given point of time, and the consequent laxity on their part in cultivating "hard virtues and disciplined habits" weaken and demoralise them beyond redemption. Their decay is hastened by anti-imperialism or the longings and struggles of the subject races for shaking off the yoke of colonial subjugation. These "psycho-social data" of modern imperialism provide further evidence to the ideas held by Polybius, the Hellenistic historian, Sze Machien, the Chinese historian of the first century B. C., or Pareto, the Italian sociologist of modern times, about the rise and fall of the empire-holding *elites* or aristocracies.

"One need not be cynical, nervous or pessimistic," observed

Sarkar in course of the above analysis, "in regard to this situation" (*ibid.* : 548). Indeed, Pareto's cynical doctrine of transfer of power in society alternately between the elites to the perpetual exclusion of the masses from its orbit was turned by Sarkar into an optimistic prophecy. With the help of Pareto's doctrine Sarkar wanted to convince everybody of that the castes or social strata suffering deprivation and indignation in his time would certainly come up some day when those dominating the upper strata at the said moment would definitely fall down from the positions of grace. Similarly, at the international plane also, India would certainly lift herself from out of the colonial bondage. "That the insignificant and the unknown of today is the epoch-maker and the world power of tomorrow has been the verdict of universal history through the ages" (Sarkar, 1942 : 133). One of the sources from which Sarkar received this note of confidence was Pareto's sociology, more particularly, his doctrine of the circulation of elites, understood, of course, in Sarkar's own way.

III

Herbert Spencer was an influential thinker in the intellectual milieu of Bengal of the time of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Bhudev Chandra Mukherjee and Satish Chandra Mukherjee, the thinkers whose ideas had a significant impact on the Bengalis in succeeding generations (cf. Forbes, 1975 : 126 ; Poddar, 1970 : 34). Discussions of Spencer's philosophical and sociological ideas marked the beginnings of studies in sociology in the Calcutta University, though sociology as a separate discipline was yet to appear in the academic scene in India. "During the first decade and a half of the present century ethics and the philosophy of religion may be said", observed Sarkar, "to have comprised, if at all, the topics of sociology, especially in so far as Spencer's, *First Principles* was recommended as a text book" (1937 : 650). One, however, looks in vain for a systematic evaluation of Spencer's ideas in Sarkar's writings.

Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics* found a place in "the

bibliographies of a few persons prominent in social philosophy and sociology" presented by Sarkar in VTSP to illustrate the "extra ordinary value of the creative visions, urges" of the youth. "The anarchistic utopianism of Spencer was formed in his 31st year in *Social Statics*."

Very brief sketches of some of the works of Spencer are available in the first volume of Sarkar's *Political Philosophies* (1928). Spencer was viewed by Sarkar mainly as an interpreter of progress with the help of the physical and biological sciences. He read in Spencer's *Social Statics* the idea of a utopian, ideal state and an attempt at a thorough-going application of physics and also of biology to the problems of politics and morals. The goal of progress, Spencer appeared to have suggested, "is anarchy, the condition of perfect 'equilibrium' in a society. Government is the embodiment of evil. If there is to be any state, let it be a mere police state" (1928 : 49). Spencer's advocacy of "equal freedom, nationalization of land and feminism" was noteworthy. Equally worth-mentioning was his delineation of two stages in political evolution : (1) Military (barbarous) and (2) industrial (civilized). The latter is based on contract. "The state is [according to Spencer] an organism like an individual" (ibid. : 50).

In *Principles of Sociology* and *The Man Vs. the State* Spencer presented, noted Sarkar, a "most elaborate formulation of the 'organismic' theory of the society and state. The state is an organism with limited functions, namely war and contract" (ibid. : 93). The war-state would ultimately be replaced by the industrial state based on contract. Spencer was a protagonist of natural rights, individual freedom, limitation of authority. This liberalism, "anti-absolutist and anti-conservative in origin", was preached by Spencer "at a time when even in England the state is already a legal protector of working men and on the continent 'social assurance' under the auspices of the state has grown into a reality" (ibid. : 148).

Spencer's individualism and "administrative nihilism" (ibid. : 166) set him apart from the French "solidarists" like Bourgeois, Bougle or Fouillee, or the American champions of

social control or "Sociocracy" such as Ward, Ross and others or the English thinkers like Hobhouse (*ibid.* : 119).

Sarkar wrote in SP, it may be recalled, that "the 'classical sociologists', Comte, Spencer and Schaeffle, three of the founders of this science...belong to what the Italian sociologist Carli...calls the historico-encyclopaedic school. They seek to explain history, point out the processes of evolution, and suggest the future lines of advance" (1936 : 4). Spencer was distinguished by Sarkar from the practitioners of "new sociology" like Toennies, Tarde or Durkheim who were interested in the analysis of forces, processes, groups and relations. Spencer was, in his opinion, a culture historian or social philosopher (Sarkar, 1941 : 526). Sarkar declared, "...Spencer would have to be appraised as a historian of institutions, not as a sociologist" (1942 : 66).

The influence of the British thinker on the westernised and modernising elites in countries in Asia and the Middle East was noticed by Sarkar in his discussion of Kemal Ataturk's modernistic achievements in Turkey (*ibid.* : 45). Spencer's ideas regarding the decline of birth rate in industrial societies were also noted by Sarkar. In his commendation of the Sarda Act, Sarkar explained the contribution of several social, cultural and economic forces towards the check on population increase. "All these social and economic influences are to be considered independently of and in addition to the 'biological' factors such as may perhaps be eventually contributed to the complex on account of the Spencerian doctrine of alleged weakening of sex impulse under conditions of intellectuality and civilization. The impact of ambitions and adventures of all sorts on the marriage-age has to be duly appraised in all schemes of demographic planning. Protagonists of artificial birth-control or Neo-Malthusianism have too long overlooked the great reality that i.e. 'moral restraints' of Malthus have.....become part and parcel of industrial civilization in so far as it has inevitably prompted the postponement of marriage in almost every region and race" (1936 : 61-62)

IV

Another British thinker who was regarded by Sarkar to have influenced the later generations in social philosophy and sociology was L. T. Hobhouse. Sarkar depicted Hobhouse as "the British sociologist...who may be described as the philosopher *par excellence* of progress" (1941 : 525). An almost forgotten piece by Hobhouse, viz., *Labour Movement* (1893) which was published in the 29th year of his life was included by Sarkar in the bibliography with which he sought to prove his thesis of the youth as the fountain of originality and creativity. For, the aforesaid work was considered to have contained the rudiments of Hobhouse's "solidaristic liberalism" with which he came to be identified in the eyes of his contemporaries and the posterity. "Hobhouse's *Theory of Knowledge* (1896) and *Development and Purpose* (1913) may be regarded as scientifically neutral treatises. Otherwise every work of Hobhouse's has a liberalising value, in a general as well as the political sense.....As an all-round liberal thinker and systematic reasoner Hobhouse is assured as considerable a place in the next generation as Mill (1806-73) enjoyed in the second half of the nineteenth century (Sarkar. 1941 : 659...Footnote 10). A long list of works by Hobhouse was mentioned to illustrate the point. It is necessary to stress the importance of *The Material Culture and Social Institutions of Simple Peoples* (1915) in which along with G. Wheeler and M. Ginsberg Hobhouse has liberated culture from the *advaita* or monocratic economic interpretation" (*idem*).

Hobhouse figured several times in the first volume of *Political Philosophies* (1928) wherein Sarkar produced very brief summaries of Hobhouse's treatises and, it seems, registered his agreement with the views of the British thinker. Thus *Social Evolution and Political Theory* was favourably evaluated for its opposition to eugenic propaganda of the extremist variety, its account of progress of human social organisation from kinship to citizenship-based state, its exposure of the imperfections of modern citizenship-based state, viz., economic inequality, dependencies, e.g. India, problems of nationalities

and minorities, its advocacy of social and socialistic control and intervention by the state for ensuring individual liberty and harmonious development of the members of the collectivities (cf. Sarkar, 1928 : 118-19). Similarly, *Morals in Evolution* (1906), *Development and Purpose* (1915) and *Elements of Social Justice* (1922) contained Hobhouse's message of progress through the 'conscious' promotion of 'harmony' between the classes. Hobhouse was deemed to have suggested that common good is the foundation of all personal rights. Democracy is the best form of political organization but is not suited to all peoples and at all times. "His ethics establishes the relativity of good. The comparative study of ethics is apt, in its earlier stages, says he, to impress the student with a bewildering sense of diversity of moral judgments. *One ends, however, by being impressed with a more fundamental and far-reaching uniformity*" (*ibid.* : 273 emphasis added). Sarkar, thus, read in Hobhouse's writings the truth which was dear to his soul. Also, he appreciated Hobhouse's thesis regarding social opportunities as positive eugenic agencies.

Indeed, in the second volume of *Political Philosophies* (1942) and, more particularly, in VTSP (1941) where he offered somewhat elaborate discussion of Hobhouse's ideas Sarkar registered his strong agreement with the British scholar's ideas in eugenics. He did not, at the same time, conceal his differences from Hobhouse who seemed to have emphasized harmony as the singular goal of progress. Sarkar noted that in his time "one of the new branches of biology, namely the eugenic branch has got mixed up with politics and law and therefore also with sociology" (1941 : 436). In India the superiority of higher castes was sought to be justified in terms of heredity, biology, eugenics. In Euro-America too certain "groups are believed to be superior and others inferior. I am talking of blood-groups or ethnic, i.e., flesh and blood classes" (Sarkar in Dass (ed) 1940 : 651). It was then patently manifest that "according to the eugenicists of every country who as a rule believe in the majesty of the blood as well as according

to their political allies who as a rule are opposed to socialism and the demands of the poor there are superior and inferior stocks and strains in every region or race" (*ibid.* : 652). Any social process or measure that might lead to intermixture of them was seriously opposed by these eugenists. The British political eugenists, for example, sought to forbid the fusion or miscegenation of the allegedly superior or inferior strains as well as to prevent the multiplication of the so-called inferior stocks. Sarkar squarely challenged the foregoing ideas, notions, justifications and theories in his "Eugenic Potentialities of Alleged Inferior Races and Classes" in the *Calcutta Review* of March 1938 and also in "Sociology of the poor and Pariah" published in the September 1940 issue of the same journal (and reproduced in Dass (ed 1940 : 632-653). "The abolition of all sorts of race prejudices, social privileges and inequalities based on ethnic considerations, and distinctions between Occidental and Oriental peoples on the one hand, and the establishment of race-equality, class-equality and caste-equality in interhuman or social relations, on the other, are" declared Sarkar, "two of the fundamental planks in my scheme for national and international reconstruction" (*ibid.* : 653). He continued his tirade against the theories of racial purity and the "dysgenic or eacogenic" effects of fusion of people of different stocks and strains through his CI (1937) PBHS (1937a) and VTSP (1941) and found in this matter a great ally in Hobhouse.

The pages of VTSP contain a scrutiny of the views of a host of eugenists including Francis Galton, Ammon, Lapouze and Pearson who represented the "status-quo, birth-centric, anti-environmentalist and Brahmanocratic school of political eugenics" (1941 : 438). Niccefero, the Italian sociologist, severely contorted the orthodox school in eugenics. And, "It was against this Brahmanocratic school that the British sociologist Hobhouse carried on a propaganda in his American lectures, *Social Evolution and Political Theory...*" (*ibid.* : 429), Hobhouse pleaded in favour of "social opportunities" and considered them "to be really 'eugenic' agencies, because they

might be helpful to the thriving of desirable 'mutations', the real basis of 'racial' progress" (*idem*). Like Hobhouse, Barn, H.S. Jennings, L. Hogben, J. Holmes and others too were cited by Sarkar in his critique of the inherent conservatism and essential elitism of the eugenists like Galton and Pearson, Ammon and Lapouge. He sought to "combat [] the ideas of Ammon and Lapouge and demonstrate [], with special reference to developments in India, that the upheaval of the alleged lower castes or classes cannot be assumed to be tantamount to a cacogenic or dysgenic predominance" (*ibid.* : 440).

J. B. S. Haldane came to conclude through his extensive researches that it is never possible from a knowledge of a person's parents to predict with certainty that he or she will be either a more adequate or a less adequate member of the society than the majority. "The impact of such biological researches is to place a damper on the over-enthusiastic hereditarians and help British liberalism in politics and law forward along the lines established by Hobhouse's sociological work" (*ibid.* : 441). Similarly, Mendel and De Vries were mentioned for their doctrine of biological atoms or unit characters. These units behave as if they were discrete entities and might be distributed to the offspring independently of one another and reunited in new combinations. According to "Mendelian inheritance" it should be possible to sort out the best qualities from the worst by hybridization. The Mendelian thesis thus opened up the possibilities of social improvement by constructive social legislation. The removal of the worst specimens of degeneracy by sterilization rendering them incapable of reproduction is the negative method. "Positively speaking, humanitarian socialistic legislation may enable the poorer classes to survive and contribute some of the desirable atoms or units of the Mendelian doctrine to the general fund of the race for intermixture and fusion" (*ibid.* : 450). And Sarkar immediately added, "It is on arguments like this—based fundamentally on Mendel—De Vriesian eugenics,—that Hobhouse, the British sociologist erected his liberalism's creed in *Social Evolution and Political Theory...*" (*idem*).

The foregoing appreciation of Hobhouse's ideas in eugenics was punctuated by the warning given by Sarkar against an obsession with environmentalism. The same atmosphere, environment, milieu or social pattern is, he was convinced, capable of producing both law-breakers and law-abiders, vices as well as virtues. "Until morbidity, physical or mental, can be demonstrated by unquestionable tests the individual is responsible for his choice of the 'saintly' or 'scoundrel-like' behaviour" (*idem*). Sarkar envisaged for the poor and pariahs of India a new social pattern based on eugenics as the ally of public health. "First, their environment or milieu requires to be rendered more human, modern, activating or creative in every field, hygienic, educational, economic and political In the second place, the message of positive eugenics, not fewer and better children, but more children of the better sort and fewer of the worse variety (more *Sonar Kartiks* and *Dana-kata-Porees*), ought to be rendered popular in the social pattern of both rural and urban areas... And finally, negative eugenics, consisting in the elimination of the diseases calculated to render the future generation diseased, defective and infirm, has need to be assimilated by the public health authorities" (*ibid.* : 452).

There was thus a large area of agreement between Sarkar and Hobhouse regarding the role of eugenics in social progress. But the former's doctrine of creative disequilibrium 'differs fundamentally' from the theory of progress propounded by the British sociologist. According to Hobhouse, pointed out Sarkar, the goal of social evolution is harmony and virtually each work by him is a contribution to the study of harmony. "The movement away from competition, conflict, struggle, individual struggle, group struggle, class struggle, international struggle, etc. and towards the solidarity of all sorts, union, order and harmonious development is the mark of social progress [as envisaged by Hobhouse]" (*ibid.* : 525-526 ; parenthesis added). The ideal society envisioned by Hobhouse appeared to be one in which "the realization of the progress is complete and in which, therefore, competition and struggle,

i.e., forms of evil, *asat*, *adharma*, *avidya*, either do not exist or have been considerably overpowered by the forms of good, *sat*, *dharma*, *vidya*, justice, fellow-feeling, *amrita* (immortality)" (*ibid.* : 526). The British social philosopher appeared to Sarkar to have been repeating the prayer of the seekers of salvation in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishat* (I, iii, 28) for a state of perfect *sat* (real), *jyoti* (light), and *amrita* (immortality) (*ibid.* : 542). But such prayers involve a logical or rather psychological fallacy. "Patches, strands or doses of unreality, darkness and death or disharmony are bound to variegate the human personality at every stage of its development" (*idem*). Hence, the neglect of struggle or conflict of various kinds in actual social life constituted the "greatest single shortcoming" in Hobhouse's social philosophy (*ibid.* : 526). "While differing from him in this particular item of the theory I am," observed Sarkar, "in substantial agreement in regard to many of his methods and views. Especially in regard to the pluralistic principles of social causation, rational control, relativity of progress, anti-racialism, non-biological factors, constructive socialism, and democratic liberalism. Hobhouse is eminently acceptable as a pragmatic thinker" (*idem*). This evaluation appears to be more or less valid to the students of sociology even at the present moment, though it neglects certain other aspects of the contribution of Hobhouse to sociology, for example, his insistence upon recognising values as an integral part of the subject matter of sociology, etc.

Sarkar's reference to Hobhouse as a 'pragmatic thinker' is interesting. Probably, this "pragmatism" which he discovered in Hobhouse's ideas was an important reason for his attraction towards the British thinker. And this reading was not totally wrong. Hobhouse's evolutionary sociology shared the "pragmatic tasks" of the science in facilitating a better understanding of the changing nature of institutions at the present time with the help of knowledge derived in the context of wide comparative and historical studies (Fletcher, 1972 : 202). Further, Hobhouse stressed the need for keeping a tentative point of view in

science and logic. He allied his tentative approach with a study of the logical principles underlying human knowledge. "Perhaps the writer who has come closest to this point of view is John Dewey in his instrumentalism. For both Dewey and Hobhouse, there were no absolutes in the kingdoms of knowledge" (Owen, 1974 : 165). The same was true for Sarkar as well.

Despite his above appreciation for Hobhouse, Sarkar was reluctant to acknowledge the British thinker as a sociologist, or as a representative of modern sociology. Because of his consideration of progress and the future of mankind as the chief and virtually the only topic of 'all sociological sciences,' Hobhouse should better be ranked as one of the culture-historians or social philosophers like Herder, Condorcet, Comte and Spencer. The charge is admitted by Bottomore too. "Viewing his work as a whole we do not have the impression so much of an attempt to construct a new science of society as of a new presentation of a philosophy of social progress in which the speculative part would be checked and controlled by the use of empirical data taken from history and anthropology. Hobhouse's main pre-occupation is indicated very well by the fact that, like Comte, he deals with stages of civilization rather than with actual societies, there is not to be found in his writings (with the partial exception of his short study of primitive societies, *The Material Culture and Social Institutions of the Simpler Peoples*) any detailed analysis of particular societies or types of society, and in consequence there is no thorough examination of the concept of social structure itself (Bottomore, 1955 : ii ; emphases added). It is an irony that the same criticism can be levelled against Sarkar's own ideas in sociology.

Morris Ginsberg was thought to "have continued the tradition of mental characters and the claims of eugenics have been discussed by him in no reactionary eugenicist manner" (Sarkar, 1941 : 439 . Ginsberg's *Causality in the Social Sciences* was referred to in connection with the pluralistic interpretation of culture and the discussion of direct causes, immediate causes and remote causes of war, and, for that matter of

all moral phenomena and cultural complexes (*ibid.* : 76, 127-128). Sarkar's passing references to this inheritor of liberalism of Hebbhouse in sociology ended here.

V

In his *Ingrajer Janmabhumi* which was described by Sarkar as a diary of his experiences gained by him during his travel in Great Britain, he narrated his experiences with Patrick Geddes.

Sarkar came to learn of Patrick Geddes first from Sister Nivedita. Geddes had earned by that time reputation in the academic circles in England, Scotland and Ireland. He became widely known for his application of the principles of Botany, Zoology and Biology, which were the chief areas of his interest, in the field of sociology and his cultivation of civics or the science of planning of urban life and urban structures. It was but natural that the inquisitive, young Sarkar would try to contact Patrick Geddes and pay a visit to his famous Outlook Tower. Sarkar gave, in his articles in the Bengali journal, *Grihastha*, and later in the pages of *Ingrajer Janmabhumi* (Sarkar, 1922 : 292-330 ; 1914 : 1st. Edn.), a fairly elaborate and interesting account of his meetings and discussions with Geddes and his own impressions of the latter's ideas and activities in urban planning in particular and in the analysis of human society and culture in general. This account reflects Sarkar's genuine admiration for the work of Geddes. It seems, however, a little strange that Sarkar did not refer to Geddes even for once in any of his major works in English including the VISP which examined the urban social processes in India and the world, though by the time of the publication of VISP Geddes became recognised in different parts of India including Calcutta as an expert in urban planning and as the founder professor of the Department of Sociology in the Bombay University.

In the very first meeting at lunch in Geddes' house, Sarkar was told by the scientist host, 'I am a student of the sciences of nature. Hence I try to understand society, education polity,

economy, town or city, and what have you, in the light of the laws of nature. The towns or cities as well as the villages are, methinks, the "hives" of human beings. The same instinct as impels the bees to construct their hives lies behind the creation of human habitats. The story of the appearance, growth and decay of the human settlements is the same as the life-histories of the beehives" (Sarkar, 1922 : 292 ; translated by the author from Bengali). Sarkar was shown the maps and charts and pictures of different towns and cities in different countries and centuries. These maps and charts clearly indicated the location of the houses and citadels, farms and gardens, schools and temples in the towns and cities and their surrounding walls. "When these are examined and compared, the different styles of urban construction in different ages and cultures become obvious. Striking variations are noticed in the shapes, sizes and proportions of buildings, fortresses and gardens in the same town or city with changes in time. One would simultaneously appreciate the political, economic and social factors behind these changes as well as their consequences. On the whole, an important aspect of human civilisation is revealed through these accounts of the rise and growth of towns and cities. Indeed, Geddes' "civics" is a new chapter in the science of civilisation" (Sarkar, 1922 : 293-294 ; author's translation).

Geddes illustrated his views about the development of towns and cities with facts from the history of Edinborough. In earlier times the streets and houses and gardens of Edinborough had had a symmetrical arrangement, which was severely damaged by the exigencies of defence of the town against the aggressors from outside. Many buildings were demolished and many streets were destroyed to permit the erection of the boundary wall. In the eighteenth century the series of uniformly tall buildings evinced a certain kind of discipline and orderliness, though there was no worth mentioning variety. But even this order without variety was seriously jeopardised with the advent of ill-arranged aggregations of industrial plants and factories that came along with

the spread of railways. "True", observed Geddes, "variety has come in place of the drab uniformity of the eighteenth century. But what kind of variety is it? It is but the tyranny of a demonical grotesqueness, the macabre manifestation of a tumultuous anarchy. Edinborough still lies in this condition. It is the state of affairs in all the big cities of modern Europe" (cf. Sarkar, 1922 : 29; the present author's translation from Bengali).

Geddes yearned for the creative variety of social life in Europe of the middle ages preserving the identities of different groups and communities or, as suggested by Sarkar, the unity in diversity of the Indian society of earlier times, minus the political strife and internecine battles characterizing these societies. The nation-state as a socio-political and economic unit would, Geddes believed, soon become an anachronism with the triumphant marches of science which would turn the nation-states into countless "hives" of men and women tied with one another in a world federation with the international tribunals to adjudicate upon the issues arising among them and zollvereins or customs-unions regulating the competitions among the businessmen and industrialists of different countries.

Geddes explained to Sarkar the principles of the science of history as understood by him: with an account of the development of European Civilisation through the evolution of various associations and institutions from the Middle Ages down to modern times. The characteristic of Geddes' method, Sarkar noted, lay in illustrating his ideas by drawing charts and sketches and diagrams. Indeed, "a crisis of temporary blindness [in Mexico] turned him [i.e. Geddes] from an eye-minded extrovert into a philosophical classifier of sciences and inventor of graphic 'thinking machines' from folded sheets of paper" (Boardman, 1976 : 2).

Intellectually, Geddes was the disciple of Comte and had high regards for the French scholarship in general. The culture of Scotland was, according to him, greatly influenced by the French culture. Comte's "science of history" (ইতিহাস

বিজ্ঞান) and ideas of the “encyclopaedic nature of science” (বিজ্ঞানের বিশ্বকোষ) were deeply rooted in Geddes’ thought. Following Comte, he too recognised the sciences as inter-linked with one another. Sarkar cited an extract from Geddes’ writings which stressed the “profound and intimate unity” of the sciences (cf. Sarkar, op. cit. : 202). The analysis of history by Geddes moved along the lines suggested by Comte. The influence of Comte’s ideas as recorded in *The New Calender of Great Men* (Ed. by Frederick Harrison in 1892) was, in Sarkar’s view, clearly reflected in the arrangement of charts, maps and pictures depicting the course of human civilisation in the Outlook Tower. But he noticed a distinction too between the two scholars in the matter. While *The New Calendar* focussed on the great men or heroes and provided short narratives on the conditions of the common people and the evolution of human culture and civilisation as the background material. Geddes’ historical analysis provided a pageantry of the achievements of the *folk* and a story of their trials and errors which together constituted for him the story of human civilisation. The latter did not glorify the role of Great Men or Heroes. Sarkar very correctly pointed out Geddes’ emphasis on the folk, though he did not at all mention Le Play’s influence on the Scottish thinker. Geddes combined, in fact, “Comte’s sociology with Le Play’s *lieut-travail-famille* into his own double-action formula of Place-Work-Folk : Folk-Work-Place” (Boardman, 1976 : 2 and 12-13).

A detailed and informative report of Sarkar’s visit to the Outlook Tower is available in the pages of *Ingrajer Janmabhumi*.

This “geographical museum” (ভৌগোলিক মিউজিয়াম) or “art-gallery of history” (শ্রীত্বাসিক চিত্রশালা) provided the spectators like Sarkar with an eidetic presentation of the principles applied by Geddes in understanding the growth of human civilisation in its myriad aspects and through the centuries, with special reference to Edinborough and Scot-

land. The synthetic approach of Geddes had, it seemed to Sarkar, its basis on a comprehensive notion of geography which included astronomy, botany, zoology, anthropology, et al.

While explaining his art of gardening to Sarkar at the university garden at Dundee, Geddes stressed the role of a comprehensive knowledge of the laws of development of life, the features characterising the state of life and the conditions favouring and opposing it in cases of living species of different types in an effective planning of towns and cities as well as in nurturing gardens. Nature favours variety both in human beings and in plants and the scope of free development nurses this variety. This truth should be kept in mind at the time of planning and developing the urban dwellings. The application of mechanical rules, followed in the construction of industrial plants and factories, in urban planning may ensure a certain kind of order, unity or symmetry but would at the same time destroy the lively spontaneity and freedom and create a totally artificial condition. On the contrary, the acceptance of a principle of total non-interference with "natural laws", which allow absolute freedom to each natural element to develop in its own way, will help the existence and growth of differences and varieties, freedom and originality in the urban populace but may also cause a lot of confusion and complexities.

Indeed, the unhindered operation of the laws of nature renders a garden vulnerable to a variety of unwanted weeds, creepers and grass which may in no time turn the garden into a jungle. Similarly, a town or city soon degenerates into a state of pandemonium in the absence of any control or guidance by the planners and managers of urban affairs. A balanced approach combining a moderate degree of social control and ordering of the settlements with a scope for spontaneous development is thus a desideratum for a successful urban planning and administration. Sarkar thus did not miss the concomitant emphasis by Geddes on variety and spontaneity as well as on discipline and harmony in civics.

The analogy of urban planning with garden keeping expressively suggests Geddes' insistence on keeping a close touch with nature. When required, Geddes clinched his teeth and set out to fight the squalor and hubbub of million-cities like Bombay or Calcutta. "But he hated it. His love of the country, his respect for the village made him fear nor simply such disorders as this but also the sort of decadence of failure to organise life as a whole not simply with efficiency and health but with duty, sanctity and beauty" (A. Geddes, 1976 : 17).

Probably in the earlier part of his life, i.e., when Sarkar met Geddes at Edinburgh, Sarkar had an agreement with the notion of harmony in Geddes' thoughts about the evolution of civilisation. The following citation by Sarkar from Geddes' *Sex* (*The Evolution of Sex*, London : Walter Scott, 1889 ?) may be an indicator of this agreement : "The essential transition is that in progress within the Industrial Age itself, that between its initial lower phase and the incipient higher one—in a word, from the past century of paleotechnic industry, mechanical, militant, momentary, to the opening one, that of a neo-technic civilisation, founded upon more skilled and scientific industries and arts, and aiming towards truer peace than any which can be guaranteed by armour ; and towards these ends sustained alike by synthetic intelligence and by creative Idealism.... This central antithesis of paleotechnic, and neotechnic, thus involves the passage from the predominant mechanocentric thought and philosophy of industrial man to the originative, bio-centric instinct and inspiration of domestic woman..." (portions of the citation by Sarkar in Sarkar, 1922 : 302-304). The preceding statement was deemed by Sarkar to be the conclusion of the sociology (সমাজতত্ত্ব) of Geddes.

The Indians should, Sarkar urged, try to have a correct understanding of "Civics" or the art and science of urban planning and construction. The civilisation of machines and factories in the west failed to solve satisfactorily the problem of housing for the thousands of workers and gave birth to the industrial townships and cities with poor health,

premature death and lack of free air. And, the British government brought these maladies to India through their unplanned municipal centres and capitals in the country. Sarkar deplored, “ইংরাজের ধনশক্তি এবং ফ্যান্টেরী-শক্তি আমাদের নাই। অথচ তাহাদের দোষগুলি আমাদের ভাগ্যে জুটিয়াছে” ; that is, we (the Indians) do not possess the wealth and industrial power of the British but the blemishes or maladies of their industrial civilization befall us (1922 : 475). The government had the responsibility for solving the problems it created. And, since the malady had hitherto remained unknown in India and came from the British Isles, the inhabitants of India would have to depend upon the remedies developed there. It was, therefore, in the fitness of things that the government invited Geddes to India. Sarkar hailed Geddes' visit to India for another reason. A careful perusal of the scientific, historical and philosophical aspects of “Civics” or the science of urban planning and construction and a judicious application of its method would, he believed, yield much valuable information for the Indian students and open up for them new vistas for analysing and understanding the nature of evolution of the society and civilisation of India (ibid. : 476).

VI

The author of *The Folk-Element in Hindu Culture* was understandably attracted towards the views of R. R. Marett at Oxford about the subject-matter of Folklore and its methods. The essay entitled, “নৃতত্ত্ব” (i. e., Anthropology), in Sarkar's travelogue on the British Isles and their people offers a brief but interesting estimate of Marett's ideas and activities in the emerging disciplines of folklore and comparative folk-literature. Marett discussed, it seemed to Sarkar, the varying tastes of the folk, the folk-views, the folk-literature as well as the folk-art in different regions of the world from the viewpoints of sociology and psychology. Marett narrated to Sarkar his efforts in collecting data from different parts of the globe and his plan for a trip to Australia. He informed Sarkar that

the quarterly, *Folklore*, published materials regarding the Indian folk-literature. Sarkar apprised, in his turn, Marett of the work of Dinesh Chandra Sen, the pioneer Bengali folklorist, and Harijas Palit, the author of *Adyer Gambhira* which formed the basis of his FEHC.

The following citation from Marett's presidential address to the Folklore Society of London, viz., "Folklore and Psychology", was offered by Sarkar in explaining the method advocated by Marett for collecting data in folklore : "To be a folklorist worthy of the name you must first have undergone initiation among the folk, must have become one of them inwardly and in the spirit". And, Sarkar immediately added that Harijas Palit meticulously followed the line suggested by Marret (1922 : 205). The same statement was cited again in the Preface to FEHC in defence of the authenticity of the data and interpretations presented in *Adyer Gambhira*, and, consequently, in FEHC. A perusal of the methods adopted by Palit would suggest "that he has had that 'initiation among the folk' of which Dr. Marett speaks" (1917 : ix).

The views of Marett about the science of folk-lore appeared to Sarkar worth mentioning. One should first try to understand the fairs and festivals, forms o' entertainment, dances and songs in one's own locality or district and then proceed to understand the essential meaning of the age-old rites, rituals and institutions of the country. A fairly comprehensive and well-grounded idea of folk-mind or spirit of the entire nation would emerge in this way. One can then move farther to get familiarity with the inner feelings, aspirations and frustrations of the folk in other countries including the lands of the savages. Studies of a great variety of fairs, festivals, ceremonies and entertainments would help the students of human society and culture gain an acquaintance with the different manifestations of human mind and human spirit and enable them to compare the same. In fine, folklore aims at understanding the way in which the folk lives its day-to-day life, its goals and ideals, weal and woe, or, more precisely, its inner world (Sarkar, 1922 : 206).

In the University of Cambridge Sarkar met A. C. Haddon and a report of his discussion with Haddon is available in the longish essay, “অধ্যাপক হ্যাডন ও সামাজিক তথ্যসংগ্রহ” (Professor Haddon and the Collection of Data about Social Life) in his travelogue on the United Kingdom (1922 : 238-250). Sarkar expressed his genuine admiration for the zeal of the scholars at Oxford and Cambridge for gathering data through field-work. At Oxford he found Maret preparing for a field-trip to Australia. When he went to Cambridge, Rivers had already gone out on a field visit. Haddon too was busy with the preparations for his visit to New Guinea, Borneo, etc. In his dialogues with Sarkar Haddon highlighted the urgent need of conducting intensive studies of the activities, customs and beliefs of the primitive peoples in different parts of the world in order to avoid gaps or discontinuities in the account of evolution of mankind. The available material was rapidly becoming modified and was in many areas disappearing at an alarming rate.

The data about the cultures and societies of primitive peoples would, however, have to be collected carefully and systematically and not in the way in which the observers in the preceding ages gathered their data. They did not, generally speaking, live amongst the groups whose activities they reported. They hastily inferred “general truths” or “universal laws” on the basis of their observation of the activities of the groups on an external plane. But Haddon was opposed to this methodology. Haddon himself and, as he thought, Rivers too, took caution in collecting data. Haddon thought that the discipline of ethnology or social anthropology in his time was too immature to allow any generalisations or universal laws about the human society and culture. He like Rivers was in favour of restricting his study within the narrow confines of any particular people or area and trying to understand the myriad ideas and actions, customs and patterns of thought of a particular people or of the men and women inhabiting a particular area, their interrelation and evolution. This attempt at

following the historical or evolutionary sequence of values and social organisations might reveal some general laws about the ways of life and social structures of specific peoples or men and women of specific areas. In the absence of such a comprehensive knowledge of social and cultural life of a particular people or the inhabitants in a particular area Haddon would surely not proceed to make a comparative study of the institutions of that people or society with those of another people or society. Indeed, Haddon pointed out to Sarkar, sometimes the same social practice might be observed in two societies but it had quite different meanings or significance in the two situations. A comparison of the two systems simply on the basis of similarity in one practice would be misleading. But the ethnographers or ethnologists of the preceding generations propounded their "universal laws" or "general truths" about the human societies and cultures on the unsure foundation of apparent and superficial similarities. As a result, their findings became suspect in the eyes of the ethnologists and ethnographers of later generations. And, even an encyclopaedic work like *The Golden Bough* by J. G. Frazer became vulnerable since its author had to depend on such "data" collected by the previous observers. Haddon illustrated the nature of the error of ethnographers and ethnologists of the preceding generation with the case of Australia which yielded to the meticulous fieldworkers of Haddon's generation enormous varieties of different peoples inhabiting it in place of their homogeneity or uniformity highlighted by the observers of the earlier ages.

In response to a query by Sarkar Haddon strongly refuted the idea of a unilinear evolution of all the peoples on earth. According to Haddon, the ways of evolution were relative to time, space and object. A people might develop in a completely different way from another and the former was neither superior nor inferior to the latter simply because of the difference. The criterion for measuring the development in one case might prove totally inapplicable to another case. But each race wanted to assess the customs and values of

every other race with its (the assessor's) standard. It was erroneous.

What certainty was there, asked Haddon, that the races that remained in primitive conditions in his time would develop in the same way as was followed by the civilized races of Europe? The historical circumstances through which the latter had to proceed might not repeat themselves in case of the former, or for that matter, in case of any other people on earth. Haddon observed, “তাহাদের ক্রমবিকাশের কোন কোন অধ্যায়ের দ্বাই একটি ঘটনা হয় ত ইউরোপীয় ক্রমবিকাশের কোন কোন অধ্যায়ের দ্বাই একটি ঘটনার সঙ্গে তুলনীয়। কিন্তু তাহা বলিয়া দ্বাই এর ক্রমবিকাশের অভ্যন্তরে কোন এক স্তর বা একই ধারা দেখিতে গেলে মহাভ্রান্তিতে পার্তি হইতে হইবে। ভাসা ভাসা সাম্য দ্রোধীয়া দ্বাই জনসমাজের জীবনযাপ্তার ছাঁচকে একরূপ বিবেচনা করা কদাচ বিজ্ঞানসম্মত নয়।” That is, parallels of particular occurrences in this or that stage in the evolution of these non-European peoples might be found in particular events in this or that stage of the evolutionary process through which the European races had to pass. But to discover the operation of the same underlying principle or process in the two cases on the score of these similarities would lead to serious mistakes. It was not at all scientific to consider the life-patterns of two peoples the same or even similar on the basis of observation of apparent similarities. (cf. Sarkar, 1922 : 242) Haddon drew, in this connection, Sarkar's attention to two articles by him, viz., “The Soul of the Red Indian” and “Ethics Among Primitive Peoples”. The former challenged the wisdom of imposing Christianity on the Red Indians while the latter advocated the rescission of the western and Christian standard of morality in any evaluation of the conduct of primitive peoples that might have their own views and standards of morality. Haddon insisted on an adequate understanding of the peculiarities of different races for appreciating the rationale behind many apparently irrational acts and habits of these peoples. He found, for example, one plausible reason behind the infanticide practised by certain communities in the acute shortage of food in those communities.

Similarly, the worship of phallus or lingam by a certain community should have been regarded as a manifestation of its sense of admiration for the creative force rather as a betrayal of obscenity.

The authenticity of the above report by Sarkar on Haddon's views is borne out by the following remarks by Haddon in his *History of Anthropology* : "The comparative method has yielded valuable results, but it is liable to lead the unwary into pitfalls. To employ biological terms, analogy is apt to be mistaken for homology, since customs or beliefs (which, it must be remembered, are in the vast majority of cases extremely imperfectly recorded) may have a superficial resemblance, but if all the facts were known, they might be found to have had a very different origin or significance. Comparisons made within a given era or among cognate peoples have had a greater value than those drawn from various parts of the world. The comparative method has usually erred in disregarding dissimilarities, which, after all, are as significant as similarities" (1949 : 242).

What is however more interesting is Sarkar's tacit agreement with the views of Haddon since the former offered no adverse criticism of the same. Rather, Sarkar's presentation of the ideas of Marett and Haddon revealed Sarkar's appreciation of, if not his enchantment with, their ideas about the collection of data at the primary level from the field through arduous and meticulous fieldwork and the importance of social and cultural phenomena. During that period of his life when he wrote about them Sarkar had himself been a protagonist of cultural specificity of each society and the thesis of multilinear development of societies, which had so forcefully been presented by B. N. Seal in the first Universal Races Congress in London in 1911. He, however, gradually veered towards the uniformities of oriental and occidental cultures and a somewhat unilinear model of social development. And ultimately, the arguments of Marett, Haddon and of socio-cultural specificities of different peoples ceased to appeal to him.

Sarkar failed also to discern Haddon's concern with finding out a suitable framework for presenting data about the many aspects of life in a society, which would reveal their interaction instead of treating them as independent phenomena (cf. Haddon, 1949 : 120). Probably because of this, Haddon became in the later years of his life somewhat sympathetic towards functionalism of Malinowski, particularly of Radcliffe-Brown (cf. Haddon, 1949 : 124-125, 142-143). It is interesting to note that "Haddon (and Marett at Oxford) had got into the habit of sending their students to be trained by Malinowski for fieldwork" (Kuper, 1973 : 96). There is nothing surprising if Sarkar did not know all this. But the question is : Did Sarkar have in his mind any frame of analysis which would unravel the inter-connections of the parts of a socio-cultural complex and the distinctiveness of the same ? It appears that he did not. And, one cannot follow how his research orientation evinced, as Ramkrishna Mukerjee claims, a "Structural-functional orientation to Indian and Asian social organisation and culture" (Mukherjee 1979 : 41). There is no reference to either Malinowski or Radcliffe-Brown in any work by Sarkar ; nor is there any discussion of functionalism or structural-functionalism in any of his major writings save Book II-Part I of the PBHS (1921) which examines the "function" of the interdependent parts of the "saptanga" or seven limbs of a state in Hindu political philosophy (which work does not find a place in the list of works consulted and furnished by Mukherjee [1979]).

Both Talcott Parsons and R.K. Merton were referred to by Sarkar, but not their structural-functional postulates. It becomes clear from a comparison of the approaches of Sarkar and Parsons towards social stratification. The former complimented Sorokin for his contribution to the 'new indology' in showing that the processes of social mobility were the same in India as elsewhere. Sorokin discerned a form of "social mobility in the vertical line" in the rise and fall of groups as distinguished from those of individuals in the

caste system of India. "The processes in the form of this group mobility as manifest in the ascendancy of the Brahmanical aristocracy are considered by him to be identical with those that led to the gradual rise of the Christian Bishop, Clergy and the Church as a whole after Constantine. The rise and fall of the French legists as well as of the bourgeoisie and the royal aristocracies in Russia, Germany and Austria, nay, the elevation of the Russian communists after 1918 to the place occupied by the Czarist aristocracy, all embody the principles underlying the growth of what may be called the Hindu Brahmonocracy" (Sarkar, 1937a : 30). In contrast with this, the following observation from "the conclusion of a serious study" was cited by Dumont : "the theory of stratification is not an independent body of concepts and generalizations which are only loosely connected with other parts of general sociological theory ; it is general sociological theory pulled together with reference to a certain fundamental aspect of social systems" (Parsons, 1954 : 439). "In other terms", Dumont explained, "'stratification' is a particular mode of analysis of a whole social system. It is not an 'element' or 'factor' which would be common to different societies as 'social mobility' in the passage quoted from Sarkar" (1960 : 87). Sarkar, it seems, did not have the necessary patience with the elaboration of the structural-functional properties of a system.

Quite naturally, Sarkar did not pay any serious attention to the views of Parsons regarding the problem of "the structural differentiation of systems and scales of stratification, and some of the bases and functional consequences of such variations" in "An Analytical Approach to the Theory of Social Stratification" in the *A. J. S.*, May 1940 (later incorporated in Parsons, 1954 : 69-88). He rather criticised the American sociologist for the latter's characterisation of Sorokin's categories of "horizontal" and "vertical" mobility as "dangerous" (f. n. 1 to Parsons, 1954 : 69). "Parsons is not quite right in believing that Sorokin's employment of the two-dimensional spatial analogy compels everybody to admit

'the values of a single variable' or the 'variation on a single quantitative continuum'" (Sarkar, 1941 : 196).

Parsons regarded social stratification as inherent in and a constant feature of the structure of social system of action. But the content of the scale of social stratification is *not*, according to him, *uniform* for all social systems but varies within a wide range and "this variation will be a *function of the more general variations of value orientation which can be shown empirically to exist as between widely differing social systems*" (op. cit. : 74, emphasis added). An advocate of essential similarities of societies in the east and the west, Sarkar hardly showed any agreement or sympathy with this view. He was equally indifferent to Parsons' analysis of the "function of the vagueness in the actual scale of stratification in the American society towards the protection of "the important residue of the more extended kinship relations from disruption in a society where mobility is of fundamental importance" (ibid. : 83). This vagueness serves to avoid too great a strain on the social system that might arise because of discrepancies between income and occupational status. "For example, it would be generally agreed that the difference between the top range of incomes earned, on the one hand, in business and the law, on the other, in university teaching and the ministry does not accurately measure the relative prestige of the incumbents. A world-famous scientist who is a university professor on a ten-thousand dollar salary is not only at the top of his own profession but may be the full equal in status of a corporation lawyer whose income is ten times his own" (ibid. :87).

Sarkar, however, did not agree to the above statement of Parsons. He was, of course, alive to the difficulty in establishing gradations, ratings, classes, etc., as well as any other social valuation on any single base or monistic foundation. But he was at the same time painfully aware of the "Money-leaderocracy" in societies in both the east and the west. "It is the man with money that leads, or perhaps the man behind whom there is money. The

leaderocracy of money sets the social norms" (Sarkar, 1941 : 212) Scientists, musicians, painters authors, scholars, journalists and other intellectuals become for all practical purposes subordinate or subservient to the moneyed people who are their "bread-givers". Hence it is futile to suggest, as Parsons did, any equality between a university teacher with a very modest income and a lawyer earning quite a few times higher than the former, even when the professor has an extra-territorial position because of his world-wide fame. Even Parsons had to add the caveat that the scientist or professor must be able to maintain a "respectable standard of living" for himself and family to render the gap between his income and the lawyer's a matter of relative indifference. A university professor or a scientist often finds it difficult to ensure this respectable standard of living and even if he realises it, he cannot claim "full equality" with a millionaire lawyer. "Seeing that the scientist's family is not rich enough to visit the same club, and indulge in the same round of socials, excursions, theatre parties, summer vacations and world tours as the millionaire's family the contacts between the two are bound to be reduced to a minimum. And where the contacts or *Beziehungen* are lacking there cannot be any question of a 'society', still less of equality in social status ... the scientist, relatively poor as he is, and the lawyer who is a millionaire, do not belong to the same class either in creativity or in material possessions. Virtually they live in two different worlds" (Sarkar, op. cit. : 216).

What did Sarkar aim at through the above criticism ? Did he talk of the existence of two or more social systems or sub-systems in a society marked by cleavages of income and wealth ? Did he suggest that Parsons overlooked the inherent contradiction and conflict of these subsystems ? What was the exact nature of this conflict ? What might be the possible manifestations and consequences of this conflict ? It is difficult to get any straight answer to these questions. It appears, rather, that Sarkar, like Simmel (1978), emphasized the highly impersonal and abstract character of money

and the near-absolute control of money and its possessor over almost every aspect of social life. However acquired, fraudulently or through the institutionalised means, it can be used to purchase the same goods and services. His description of the all-pervading power of plutocracy in the modern capitalist society is suggestive of the existence of only one social system there with money determining every other thing. But it would be in direct contravention of the purport of his criticism of Parsons as also his own pluralistic views. Sarkar had no time for the problems emanating from the stresses and strains in the structure of a capitalist society because of this excessive emphasis on achievement in terms of amassing of money. For, he had to immediately jump to the demonstration of his favourite thesis of the fundamental similarity of people in the east and the west and of men and women in India and and Euro-America with regard to their appreciation for and display of the power of money. Had he been concerned with the structure and function of modern societies and the role of plutocracy therein, he would have appreciated Merton's ingenuity in highlighting "the social *functions* fulfilled by deviant behaviour" (Merton : 1968 : 214 ; emphasis added) in the American society in the latter's "Social Structure and Anomie" which first appeared in the *A.S.R.* in 1938 and was briefly reported by Sarkar in *Political Philosophies* (1942 : 158-159). Instead, Sarkar treated it as an inquiry into the correlation of crime and poverty. He, of course, correctly noted that, in Merton's view, poverty as such and the consequent limitation of opportunity are not sufficient to induce a conspicuously high rate of criminal behaviour.

"It is only when the full configuration is considered, poverty, limited opportunity and commonly shared system of success symbols, that we can explain the higher association between poverty and crime in our society than in others where rigidified class structure is coupled with differential class symbols of *achievement*" (*ibid.* : 159). But Merton's analysis seemed to Sarkar to be an illustration of the varying social significance of poverty in different social structures

rather than an attempt at discovering how "some social structures exert a definite pressure upon certain persons in the society to engage in non-conforming rather than conforming conduct" (Merton, 1968 : 186). There was, thus, no reference to structural-functionalism in Sarkar's discussion of the views of Parsons and Merton.

Though "structure", "function", "functionalism" or "structural-functionalism" does not figure in the index to any book by Sarkar, Sarkar wrote that his paper, 'Les Races les Classes et les forces transformatrices au point de vue du métabolisme social' at the International Congress of Sociology at Brussels in 1938 "forces upon students of social science, first, the necessity of emancipating themselves from the dogma of civilization as being the 'function' of a particular race" (1942 : 27). Does it suggest that Sarkar had a functional approach ? The singular case where Sarkar's use of the term, function, approximates to a certain extent to the current understanding of 'function' and 'functionalism' may be found in Part I of Book II of the First Edition of PBHS where Sarkar elaborated the Hindu notion of polity as "a seven-limbed (saptanga) corporation" (1921 : 35). According to the Sukraniti, the *svami* (ruler) has great a need of the *prakriti* (people) as the *prakriti* of the *svami*. Without the ruler the people do not keep to their own duties. Nor does the sovereign flourish on earth without subjects. "The relation between the rulers and the ruled is" observed Sarkar, "thus one of philosophical *necessity*, government is a *necessary institution*" (ibid. : 37). The Sukraniti illustrates the inter-relationship of the ruler and the ruled with the analogy of the inter-dependence of the head and the legs in human organism.

While Martindale referred to Kautilya's "objective realism" and his analysis of society from the standpoint of its typical conflicts and discovered an early founder of conflict theory in Kautilya (Martindale, 1967 : 129 & 150), Sarkar read a certain kind of functionalism in Kautilya's analysis of the interrelation of different parts of a polity. "Thus", Sarkar wrote, "the organicistic metaphor in *niti-*

philosophy is not merely structural or anatomical. It is partly functional, i. e., physiological as well. The entire book VIII of Kautilya is given over to the discussion of the *angas* (the *prakritis*, the organs of the state) in some of their abnormal conditions, which are generically described as *Vyasana*, i.e., the antithesis of *guna* or 'natural' attributes. Each *anga* is presented in its 'out of humour' state, so to speak, in the circumstances that deprive it of its 'proper' *dharma* (functions), and hence of its just merits. Such conditions may befall the state through ignorance, vice, calamity or accidental disaster. In this pathological analysis, one chief motive of the theorist is to indicate that at least six of the 'constituent elements' are really so many functionally differentiated organs to such an extent that the *Vyasana*, say, the disease or weakness of one involves automatically the disease or weakness of the others, one 'peccant' part affecting the well-being of all. We understand that the *angas* are 'organically' united as fairly interdependent parts of one vital *corpus*, and that no one is redundant, but that all are equally *necessary* to one another and to the whole, although, of course, the practical statesman knows what weight to attach to each" (VIII, i, last three verses of Kautilya's *Arthashastra*; referred to in PBHS. 1921 : 37).

Sarkar's distinction between structure as anatomical and function as physiological aspects of the body politic anticipated Radcliffe-Brown's explanation of the terms, structure and function. Structure refers to, according to the British social anthropologist, "some sort of ordered arrangement of parts or components A building has a structure, so does a molecule or an animal" (Radcliffe-Brown, 1964 : 9). And, in reference to social systems and their theoretical understanding, "one way of using the concept of function is the same as its scientific use in physiology" (ibid. : 12). Again, Sarkar's reference to the *necessity* of one part or *anga* of the political organism (as conceived of by the Hindu thinkers) for the other parts is suggestive of Durkheimean understanding of function as the fulfilment of a *need*. "To ask what the

function of the division of labour is", wrote Durkheim, "is to seek the need which it supplies" (Durkheim, 1964 : 49) Sarkar's analysis contains hints at the properties of a functional system, viz., a) the elements of a system, (Sarkar referred to the polity) are functionally interrelated; (b) the components of a system generally contribute positively to the continuity of a system and (c) most systems affect other systems (cf. Abrahamson, 1978 : 5-6). His consideration of the disruptive or dysfunctional consequences of an organ that might be weakened for one reason or another buttresses this idea of the polity as a system.

Is there any order or graded scale of vulnerability by which one can ascertain the degree of seriousness of a calamity to the entire body-politic from the *Vyasana* appearing through *anaya* (ill luck) or *apanaya* (wrong courses of action) and affecting just one of its organs? The Kautilyan theory asserts, Sarkar pointed out, that there is a real difference in the relative importance of one *prakriti* as against another as limbs of the political organism. "The argument, however, amounts virtually to demonstrating the fact that each element is supreme in its own place serving a distinct purpose for the common end" (1921 : 38). Serious differences of opinion may be noted among the ancient Hindu writers on the theme. While Kautilya accepts the traditional idea that the *vyasana* of the master is more serious than that of the minister, Bharadvaja believes that the *vyasana* of the minister is more serious than that of the master and Visalaksha avers that the *Vyasana* of the people and territory is more serious than that of the minister. Kautilya, Bharadvaja, Visalaksha, Pisuna, Vatavyadhi disagree with one another regarding the relative importance of the different angas and the relative seriousness of their ailments. "It is clear", Sarkar remarked, "that, whichever be the *anga* advocated, the claims advanced by the opponents are substantially the same, viz., that its function is mainly responsible for the health and life of the organism, for *desa-vriddhi*, i. e., national advancement. And, since Kautilya has in this manner to advocate the claims of each,

prakriti in succession (with the exception of the ally), we can see how important the limbs are not only to the whole, but also to one another, functionally speaking" (*ibid* : 39 ; emphases, save those on Sanskrit words, added).

The foregoing analysis has a lot of similarity with Malinowski's general axioms of functional properties of culture. Culture is "a system of objects, activities and attitudes in which every part exists as a means to an end. It is an integral in which the various elements are interdependent" (Malinowski, 1969 : 150). In Sarkar's analysis, every element of the political organisation, as visualized by the Hindu political thinkers, is a means to the promotion of *desa briddhi* and is related to the other elements as well as to the whole in terms of interdependence. Commenting on the competing interpretations of the relative importance of particular *angas* Sarkar wrote, "Now, the idea of equal importance of the parts is not indispensable in a theory of organic unity. It is enough if some sort of functional coordination is established. We find, then, that Kautilyan doctrine of the interdependence of at least six of the seven angas, although partial, is expressive and significant" (Sarkar, 1921 : 39). Another such organicistic concept in regard to some of the limbs of the political organisation was discovered by Sarkar in Sukra's writings. According to Sukra, just as the branches, etc., of a tree wither up when its roots decay, so without the king, the commanders of the army and others in the state grow powerless. Like the other analogies in the field, this analogy also "is to be appreciated only as an evidence of the idea that no department of the state is independent of the others, and that the *rajya* is an *indissoluble whole*,—one vital sap running through all its parts from the soil up" (*idem* ; emphasis added). The last comment indicates Sarkar's appreciation of the idea of a systemic whole underlying a socio-political entity. In view of the fact that the ideas regarding 'system', 'structure', 'function' were just inchoate in the parlour of sociologists and anthropologists at the time when Sarkar put forward the above analysis of interdependence

of the angas of a *rajya* in ancient Hindu political thought, one cannot but admire this attempt by Sarkar at articulating the notions of system, structure, and 'function' of the socio-political wholes and their elements. But it does not justify the characterization of Sarkar's method of sociological analysis as structural-functional. For, Sarkar did not further develop these ideas ; nor did he find a single further occasion for applying these notions in his analyses of social and political phenomena. Rather, whatever rudimentary idea Sarkar had of functionalism was abandoned by him in favour of formal sociology.

Sarkar wrote, "What is sociology ? Sociography is not sociology. It is geography, descriptive economics or anthropology. Culture-history is not sociology. It is history of institutions or of ideas and ideologies. The study of progress or human destiny is not sociology. It is philosophy or metaphysics. An enquiry into the causes of social changes, transformations, metabolisms and reconstructions, or of correlations, functional relations, etc. is not sociology. It is logic (1941 : 664 ; emphasis added). It is to be noted that in PBHS also where he elaborated the idea of functional interdependence of the different parts of the rajya Sarkar concluded his discussion with the observation that the doctrine of *saptanga* did not seek to popularise an "arbitrarily strung system of seven categories" but embodied really a psychological attempt to conceive and classify political phenomena in their *logical* entirety.

It was, therefore, not so much the utility, if any, of the functional or structural-functional approach in analysing social and political phenomena as its logicality which appealed to Sarkar. He was, however, very distinctively attracted towards formal sociology. "Sociology is", he observed, "nothing but the analysis of sociations. The processes and forms or patterns of all types involved in the relations between human beings (*Zwischenmenschliche Beziehungen*) constitute its only subject matter. In our time Leopold von Wiese has been concentrating on this aspect of the 'social'

in his sociological studies. In the U.S.A. the general tendency is to promote and develop this viewpoint. It is time that this methodology be accepted by sociologists throughout the world" (1941 : 665).

Sarkar admitted, of course, that a strict adherence to von Wiese's methodology would often land sociologists "virtually in the extremely restricted field of logical, formal, heuristic, definitional or analytical concepts and categories" (*ibid.* : 666).

It would be extremely difficult, rather, impossible, to isolate the "social form" from its content. The sociologist while studying the reality cannot ignore the concrete topics or problem studies in which the anthropologist or the political scientist may be interested. These "non-sociological or extra-sociological" problems do intrude the domain of sociological discourses. "In spite of this all-inclusive character, generally desirable as it is, for sociological treatises, there should be ample field left for purely analytical studies bearing on associations, social configurations, social metabolisms or transformations" (*idem*). Sarkar's faith in formal sociology was thus unshakable.

He would somehow accommodate the study of every phenomenon within the purview of formal sociology, though he accepted that sociology "is a specialized social science".

One may take up, for example, Sarkar's discussion of the sociology of population. The manner in which the topics of population are generally discussed by the students of biology, eugenics, demography, or anthropology can, felt Sarkar, hardly have a place in sociology as defined by the formal school which deems sociology a science of social relations or processes and social forms. "But," he pointed out, "there is a safety-valve even in the crisis created by the new concept in sociology's functions. Population is the complex that engenders legion of *soziale Beziehungen* and *soziale Gebilde*. Population movements, whether natural..... or artificial...are social relations or social processes. Urbanization and colonization can therefore have a place in the study of

soziale Beziehungen. Villages, cities, states, etc. can likewise be studied in the science of *soziale Gebilde*. And so on. Population's place in sociology can thus be assured even under the most 'formal' interpretations" (Sarkar, 1936 : 6-7). From such a standpoint Sarkar declared his "convictions (1) that population touches sociology at every point and in every branch and (2) that sociology is interested in every aspect of the population question from the biological and the eugenic to the criminological, the sanitary, the pedagogic, the economic and the political. To us anthropology (history) is the key or the foundation, politics the goal, and psychology the very being of sociology" (ibid. : 9).

Did Sarkar, then, suggest that sociology studies the most general characteristics of social phenomena which belong to all specific forms of human relationship, while other sciences study these specific characteristics (content) ? It would mean that sociology is not a "specialized social science," which Sarkar described it to be, but a generalizing science.

Sarkar would not mind this self-contradiction. This paradox is, of course an inherent feature of the formal school (cf. Sorokin, 1956 : 499-501). Sarkar was, in reality, after a most generalising science of society. He wanted, like von Wiese, to show that it was possible to employ the same method everywhere and to analyse the whole of social reality with the aid of this method (cf. Aron, 1964 : 9). He did not bother if the discipline that would depend on such an approach proved to be more descriptive than explanatory.

He remained equally unperturbed with the critics' denial of that the essence of the social can reside in supra-historical relations of a general character. Truth to tell, Sarkar, an untiring seeker of uniformities in the ideas and activities of people in the east and the west, fell back upon this very supra-historical character of the concepts and methods of formal sociology in order to drive home his thesis of the fundamental unity of men throughout the globe and across the centuries. The veracity of the preceding observation is amply borne out and concretely illustrated by his

analysis of the Dharma-sastras in the light of Leopold von Wiese's Formal sociology.

The "analytical" treatment of political phenomena is, according to Sarkar, a prominent feature of the Hindu political thought as enshrined in the *Dharma* and *Artha-sastras* which postulate that "man in politics is fundamentally a bundle or complex of social or 'between-men', i. e., interhuman relationships. These treatises do not seem to be interested in this or that particular state....Their topic for discussion is the state *ueberhaupt*, i.e., the state as 'the thing in itself' as it were" (1937a : 654). Sarkar immediately added that he did not attach to the German expression any metaphysical implication. The treatment found in the Hindu political treatises is, he asserted, objective, concrete and human. To the authors of these sastras "a state is a human association and therefore is nothing but a system of relations and orientations. Altogether, we are presented by the Hindu philosophers with the very pattern, form, geometry, so to say, of human relations (ibid. : 655). Whatever be the content of the state, however varied be the races that constitute its membership, wheresoever located it be, "the relations between the members of the state are eternal" (*idem*).

Viewed in this light, the ideas of the authors of the *Dharma* and *Artha-sastras* would appear to be "fine logical contributions to what is being described as 'pure', 'analytical' or 'formal' sociology" (*idem*) : This formal sociology was described by Leopold von Wiese as die Lehre von den sozialen Beziehungen und den sozialen Gebilden or, in short, Beziehungslehre, i.e, the science of relations. "*And the special feature of this science of relations consists in the fact that it deals not with historical or time conditioned categories but with the categories such as are 'above' or indifferent to time (ueberzeitlich) and somewhat eternal (quasiewig).* These categories relate to such relations or processes of 'to' and 'away from' (*Zu-und Auseinander*) as prevailed, are prevailing and will prevail so long as there are human beings (ibid. : 655-56 ; emphasis, save that on German words, added).

Though von Wiese traced the origin of this "new sociology" to Toennies or, more particularly, to Simmel, Sarkar found the entire literature of *Dharma*, *Smriti*, *Artha*, and *Niti Sastras* rich in the analysis of social forms and social relationships or processes (*ibid.* : 657). Gautama and Kautalya or even their predecessors pursued "methodologically at any rate", something akin to formal sociology. The formal school is therefore very old and its rudiments are clearly discernible in the writings of ancient law-givers in the east, though it is proclaimed to be "new" in Euro-America of modern times. In defence of this view, Sarkar cited Sorokin's comment that its "founders were all law-givers who first formulated the first rules of social relations, and especially all Jurisconsults and theorizers of law" (Sorokin, 1956 (1928) : 498). Sorokin started with Confucius and Sarkar proudly referred to his counterparts in the Hindu India of ancient times.

Sociology deals, according to Sarkar, with the topics relating to sociation. VTSP was written with "the object of analyzing the processes or patterns or forms of societal transformation, metabolism and progress....The fundamental theme is the social relations, reconstructions or remakings that constitute progress" (1941 : i) Sarkar never eschewed the notion of change or progress. "Every intermental process or inter human relation is attended with some form or dose of transformation, change, metabolism or reconstruction. No sociation can be conceived without such changes or remakings" (*ibid.* : ii). Probably because of this attachment to the notion of change, Sarkar did not feel attracted to functionalism.

Because of its original polemic against the classical evolutionists functionalism had since its beginning had to emphasize integration and stability. Anthropological functionalism of the 1920s and 1930s was succeeded in the American sociological parlour by what Smith has termed normative functionalism (Smith, 1973 : 3). Normative functionalism put the main emphasis on the stabilising effects

of norms (and institutions) which in an action frame of reference are held to govern role-expectations between interacting individuals. A society in which norms produced this *stability and equilibrium* was one which could fulfil its major functional imperatives. The idea that functionalism was a theory of social stability and not change was accepted by the majority of sociologists throughout the 1940s and the 1950s. That is, even if it is assumed that Sarkar took a serious interest in and was influenced or guided by functional or structural-functional approach (as Ramkrishna Mukherjee wants us to believe), the fact remains that functionalism in Sarkar's time was identified with stability and equilibrium.

Despite the attempts by individual functionalists to offer explanations of particular changes, the over all static bias and generality of the conceptual framework of functionalism prevented it "from making any lasting contribution to the study of social change" (Smith, 1973 : 2). But Sarkar hardly had the need for a theory or model of social stability. The task before Sarkar had always been to rebut the view that the oriental societies had remained stationary over time. He wanted, to repeat ad nauseum, to sensitise his audience to their capacity for changing themselves in response to the demands of the exigencies. They did not and would not, he assured, lag behind their western counterparts in this respect. He sought to do it first with his thesis of *creative disequilibrium* and simultaneously with a recourse to formal sociology which would incorporate the phenomenon of social change as a process of socialisation along with social stability (as the other process). This kind of use of formal sociology helped Sarkar aver that "Many of the alleged psycho-social marks of industrialization, capitalistic economy, or modernism are observable in pre-industrial, pre-capitalistic or pre-modern as well as non-industrial, non-capitalistic or non-modern communities... These identities, equations, or assimilations and continuities between the rural and the urban, the agrarian and the industrial, the medieval and the modern are to be accepted

as scientifically valid propositions for theoretical ground-work in social psychology and sociology" (1941 : ii).

What really interested the functionalists was how societies survive and cohere in the face of external pressure and internal strain, and not so much how they change. But the most important task before Sarkar was to explain whether and how far the Indian society and culture was oriented to and capable of change. Even in the earlier years of his life when Sarkar was sympathetic to the ideas of uniqueness and spiritual glory of the Indian culture, he tried to prove that because of its emphasis on spirituality, variety and autonomy of individuals as against the Greek attachment to the mundane life and harmony, it blossomed forth in ever new forms of vitality in response to the variegated conditions through different ages ["...স্বাতন্ত্র্যের সাহিত নব নব যুগোপযোগী নব নব জীবনীশক্তির প্রকাশ করিতে সমর্থ' হইলাছে।"] (Sarkar, 1911 : 180). He talked, even in those days, of a fundamental difference between man and the lower organisms as regards their relations with the environment. "Though, no doubt, it is the conditions in the surrounding world that mould and modify the life and form of every living organism, it is man alone of all created beings that can make his own environment and create the opportunities..... It is possible for man to realise 'what is not', to extend an empire over the physical and elemental forces of the world, to transcend the limitations of time and space, and regulate them so as to make them conform to his own needs, and by elevating the status of society to bring about a millennium in religion and philosophy" (1912c : 68-69).

Sarkar was never absorbed with the analysis of the internal consistency and harmony of a given socio-political system or nation. None of the various aspects of national life, he reminded, are absolutely dependent on the particular people concerned ; 'all are the products and resultants of the mutual influences of all nations and national activities on one another' (bid. : 66). The events external to the ambit of any particular nation would not have been understood and interpreted by Sarkar to be just those *accidents* from outside the unit "which

“disturb’ the smooth cumulation of a dynamic equilibrium” (Smith, op. cit. : 149) and thus provide the system with the momentum to unfold itself. “Ideals and phenomena of civilisation.” Sarkar declared, “...are what man makes them to be, and *not the chance-creations of fortuitous conjuncture of circumstances*” Sarkar 1912c : 74 , emphasis added). They are, no doubt, the products of environments But human will and intelligence make and regulate these environments.

The buzzword in Sarkar’s sociological discourses is not stability or even equilibrium but disequilibrium or, as he had continually referred to it, *creative disequilibrium*. “At every stage of organized life or culture, nay, at every moment of individual existence man is the theatre of struggles between the polarities, *asat* (unreality) and *sat* (reality), *tamas* (darkness) and *jyoti* (light), *mrityu* (death) and *amrita* (immortality), *avidya* (ignorance) and *vidya* (knowledge) ..The mental, spiritual or social condition is, then, one of discord and unrest. No stage of the *psyche* can be envisaged as one of harmony, concord or equilibrium. It is a condition of unending disequilibrium, disharmony and discord that accompanies the individual and his interactions with other individuals in his onward march. War between good and evil is the eternal lot of man.....Evil changes its forms and so also does good. The disequilibrium, likewise appears constantly in new guises. The remakings of the individual personality and the societal transformations are but different movements of equilibrium from point to point. One position of disequilibrium changes for another position. But it is disequilibrium all the time. It is the different positions, stages or forms of disequilibrium in motion that constitute progress” (1941 : 521).

Almost all the functionalists have emphasised the role of a shared value system or “central values” in maintaining social equilibrium as well as in directing and limiting the range of changes possible in a social system. But Sarkar averred, “In my view a definite goalfulness cannot be maintained as the nature of human remakings or societal transformations” (1941 : vi). He believed that societies are

essentially heterogeneous or pluralistic in nature, and values may be asynchronized with one another. Further, he would not have at all accepted functionalism's implicit limitation on individual or personal choice. According to him, "...life is an adventure and society an experiment. The series of adventures and experiments constitutes progress. The groups in their plurality and heterogeneity (including the state) are always recognised as human creations and creative agents in adventures and experiments. But the senior partner or determinant and grand transformer in socio-cultural dynamics or evolution is the individual" (*ibid.* : iv-v). Through this emphasis on indeterminateness, insecurity and uncertainty as the inherent features of man's social existence and cultural world as also on the ever changing character of the standards of evaluation and judgment Sarkar distinctly appears as a pragmatist. Indeed, he quoted Dewey in support of this particular view of human nature and society (*ibid.* : 536). In the preface to V.T.S.P. which elaborated this view Sarkar observed, "My method and view-point have throughout been matter-of-fact. Perhaps people would like to describe this treatment as considerably pragmatic" (*ibid.* : iv)

VII

C. Wright Mills once suggested that "it would be significant to trace the receptions of Dewey's work in the hands of Orientals and scholars of non- or only semi-industrialized countries, especially those of China and India, as well as of Mexico and Turkey" (1966 : 467). Any attempt in the direction indicated by Dewey must grant a prominent place to Sarkar's views regarding man and society. According to Chaudhury, "...Sarkar's orientations to life appear to be profoundly pragmatic. He was a pragmatist already in 1907 when he started his educational institutions in Malda... I believe that pragmatism continues still to be his philosophy" (Chaudhury in Dass (ed.), 1940 : 487). The remark is true to a great extent.

Pragmatism appeared in America. Though the American

scholar, Charles Peirce, coined the term, it became popularised through James and Dewey. It was through the writings of James and Dewey that pragmatism reinstated a theory of faith and at the same time sought to discredit all conventional institutions, authorities, theologies and creeds (Schneider, 1957 : 326). Pragmatism was "the nerve of progressive American thinking" for the first several decades of this century (Mills, 1963 : 292). And, early pragmatism was "sociological and not philosophical. It paid scant attention to 'fundamentals'. Its theoretical energies were focussed on the practical, the immediate and the reformable" (Horowitz, 1966 : 28).

The early sociology in America was informed by the very distinct point of view of pragmatism. "It paid virtually no attention to institutions in the European sense, implied ...that society was to be understood as the creation of individuals, that it was truly a society, and not a mere aggregation, by virtue of the sense of community that individuals established with each other in their interactions, and (with the exception of Ross) that the past accumulation of institutional practices and their constraining conventions were largely irrelevant to an understanding of how people came to do what they did" (Hawthorn, 1976 : 209). The pragmatic conviction that individuals are creative and free and thus in principle capable of starting again has proved very useful to the Americans in times of despair (*ibid.* : 243). Stress on private enterprise and invention has been a hallmark of American pragmatism. While attempting an explanation of why the scientific tradition is stunted in the Asian East while flowering in the European West, Mills wrote: "The 'thinking elite' in China did not learn from the carpenters, the surveyors, the men who in the west combined eye and hand and tools and laid a basis for a logic of things : a material and tool logic that is at the heart of 'the modern physical science'....In America this type of generalization from laboratory and craft facts has gone further than anywhere else. American

pragmatism from Peirce through Dewey, and the core of Veblen has been built squarely around the technological laboratory and industrial domain of the culture. The Chinese did not" (Mills, 1993 : 499),

Thus, according to Mills, what is called scientific in the European West is precisely what the scientific tradition in America calls pragmatic. The pragmatic vision of the true scientist emphasized the fusion of hand and head, of craft and intellect. Benoy Kumar Sarkar shared in an abundant measure this pragmatic vision. Also, he had the same limitations as the pragmatists were subjected to. The pragmatists had typically been sons of the middle class : so too had been the publics of pragmatism. In spite of valiant stands on particular issues, "articulate pragmatism has in social fact never been the ideology of lower income groups and occupations....At most pragmatism has been the ideology of liberal professional man, however much he may have thought of the disadvantaged" (ibid. : 167). This characterization of the American pragmatists and their ideas applies with equal effect to Sarkar and his views. Sarkar, a middle class liberal intellectual with, of course, great sympathies for the down-trodden, and with a strong yearning for an India that would not hesitate to repudiate the age-old stereotypes in social and cultural spheres in order to remake herself along the lines of scientific and industrial advancement with a note of self-confidence, was obviously enchanted with pragmatism's emphasis on the power of man's intelligence to control his destiny.

It is difficult to suggest how and when Sarkar first came in contact with the philosophical current of pragmatism. Sarkar gratefully acknowledges how he was introduced to the scholarly world in America through Dewey and Seligman (Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 239, 534-535).

While Dewey's influence on Sarkar was an expected one and Sarkar favourably referred to various treatises by Dewey in books like PP (1928), VTSP (1941), Sarkar's introduction to pragmatism seems to have been much earlier

than his acquaintance with Dewey. His writings of 1912, particularly his notion of "Viswasakti", evinced the pragmatist spirit. Maybe, the wave of pragmatism reached the milieu of "Young Bengal" that nurtured the minds of young-men like Sarkar.

"In so far as young India's brain is nurtured on English thought it is today", wrote Sarkar in 1937 "at least one-third Americanized in methodology and outlook. Emerson O.W. Holmes, James, Boas, Stanley Hall, Dewey, Seligman, Taussig, Mitchell, Small, Giddings, Lowie, Goldenweiser, Ross, Sorokin, Max Weber (the artist), Barnes, Hocking, Hawkins, Parmelee as well as Carnegie, Edison, Ford and other American names are to be counted among some of the enduring influences on Indian life and thought" (480; emphases added). It is a bit striking that Sarkar made only tangential references to James here and there (1937 : 478, 480 ; in Mukhopadhyay, 1941 : 68, 184, 189), though there is a strong resemblance between the ideas of James and Sarkar. While congratulating B. N. Seal on the publication of *The Positive Sciences of the Ancient Hindus* on 30 June 1916, he compared Seal with James, Bergson and other great thinkers. He felt elated that Vivekananda and Abhedananda were appreciated by James. His own conception of truth or truths as stated on the first page of PP (cf. Sup, 87) seems to reflect the following observation of James in *Pragmatism*: "Truth with a big T, and in the singular, claims abstractly to be recognised, of course ; but concrete truths in the plural need be recognized only when their recognition is expedient" (James, 1911 : 232). Sarkar did not, in this case, acknowledge his debt to James, nor did he do it in other cases as well where he appears to have utilised James' ideas, of course, *in his own way*.

Obviously, Dewey had a more immediate effect on Sarkar's thoughts. But Dewey is considered to be the successor to James in continuing the vitalistic, voluntaristic, pragmatic school in America. First, William James's *biological psychology* strongly influenced Dewey. "It is the strain in James which

emphasizes the biological bases of an objective psychology which fell in with Dewey's focus" (Mills, 1966 : 297). A sort of "control-of-the-environment—through—adaptation formula of action and thought" seems to characterise Dewey's ideas (ibid. : 381) and the same appears to deeply affect Sarkar's thoughts. According to Dewey's philosophy of "instrumentalism", ideas are plastic and adaptive, and like new organs, they owe their survival and stability to the vital functions which they serve. This view essentially resembles James' notion of ideas and their veracity.

James opposes materialism and mechanism as also spiritualism of the traditional type. There are two central ideas in James' psychology. Although inclined to constitute consciousness, in tune with the British tradition, as a manifold of distinguishable states traceable to sense-experience, he insisted upon its *activity* and *unity*. The activity of consciousness is selective, interested, teleological. The unity of consciousness consists in its through and through connectedness. James' theory of knowledge was developed from this psychological standpoint, and is throughout dominated by its two characteristics . its emphasis on the categories of interest and practice, and its reduction of relations, substances, activities, and other alleged transcendent elements to continuities of sense experience. The former element in James' thought led his voluntarism and pragmatism, the latter to his "radical empiricism."

"The term [pragmatism] is", James wrote in *Pragmatism*, "derived from the same Greek word *pragma*, meaning action, from which our words 'practice' and 'practical' come. It was first introduced into philosophy by Mr. Charles Peirce in 1878" (1975 : 28). There are, James pointed out, two sorts of knowledge : knowledge *by acquaintance* and knowledge *about*. In the former the object is immediately presented, in the latter it is known mediately or by means of ideas. The function of the idea is not to reproduce the object, but to prepare for or lead the way to it. Pragmatism consists primarily in the "method" which interprets our idea of an object as "what

conceivable effects of a practical kind the object may involve —what sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare" (*ibid.* : 29). The truth of an idea will therefore consist in the ulterior satisfaction which it affords, either through the fulfilment of sensory expectation or the success of the reaction. But since we form expectations only for the purposes of action, their fulfilment is only an incident of practical success, and it may be said of truth as a whole that it consists in the utility or "working" of ideas ; or that "the true.....is only the expedient in the way of our thinking..." (1948 : 170).

The final justification of all ideas, like their meaning, is to be found in the service which they render to the will. It is the will which accounts for our having ideas at all, and it is the will to which in the last analysis they are accountable.

This being the case, moral or aesthetic demands may properly be decisive where ideas are not verifiable in the limited sense of the fulfilment of sensory expectations. This is James' famous doctrine of the "will to believe", in which, he contends the scruples of positivists. Since science itself arises in response to practical demands, it cannot overrule such demands. It is impossible to avoid extra-empirical beliefs, for the very omission of them is equivalent to their negation. He who from scientific point of view declines to believe in God is in effect *dis-believing* in God ; and sense-experience does not support the negation any more than it supports the affirmation. Since one cannot remain non-committal—since, in other words, there is a "forced option," "our passional nature not only lawfully may, but must decide.

Truth is, according to James, not the name of a timeless essence (*ibid.* : 38, 105, 111). The truth of ideas lies in the advantageous connections they lead to and help us establish in experience. But experience, by changing and sometimes "boiling over", forces us to correction and revisions among our ideas or theories. New adaptations to new conditions are called for; new kinds of objects and forms of conduct take on

importance; new truths, new arrangements, are reached. Further, James understood judgements of truth and reality to admit of relativity : Conditions of "agreement" and the concepts of what works is 'useful' or 'expedient' and 'beneficial' and the like, are each meaningful and applicable relative to certain specific needs and interests. Where differences of need and purpose enter in to affect otherwise common conceptualization of experience, the conditions of meaning and the function of ideas and the value thought contributes to action may be different. Thus, to some extent (but not entirely, since we live in a world largely conceived in common) we may severally be led to decide that some ideas are true (pragmatically) for some persons and false for others.

Lastly, "pending the final empirical ascertainment of just what the balance of union and disunion among things may be", pragmatism must rest "itself upon the pluralistic side". Pragmatism must "turn its back on absolute monism and follow pluralism's more empirical path" (*ibid.* : 79). C. Wright Mills reads in *Pragmatism*, particularly in a specific passage of the work (cf. *ibid.* : 94), James' desire to retain and intellectually to exploit "various phases of his poly-sided experience", to reconcile the divisive intellectual tensions which have developed between these diverse modes of experience and thought. It explains his emphases on pluralism, on mediation with pragmatism as its spearhead, and on the categories of "instrumentality" and "purpose". A similar desire appears to have characterised the corpus of thoughts and ideas of Sarkar, since he too had a similar kind of cosmopolitan mobility and sensitivity to a variety of persons, associations and movements representing different views and focussing on diverse perspectives and the problem of how to reconcile them.

Human life is, wrote Sarkar as back as 1912, subjected to the same *biological law* as governs the emergence and development of any organism in nature, be it a plant or an animal. Each living organism appears and grows in an environment which is provided by Nature and which consists of forces

both favourable and unfavourable. An organism will try to utilise the forces favourable to itself and cope with the inimical forces. Besides, among the living beings themselves there are relations of alliance and rivalry. The survival and development of an organism depends on how successfully it can adapt itself to various world-forces which are always changing. "Just as plants and other lower organisms display diversity of structure and characteristics in order to adapt themselves to the play of diverse agencies in the universe, so man also manifests various aspects of life and character under various sets of influences, takes recourse to various modes of living, and preserves his continuity and individuality under various forms adapted to the varying conditions of the social and physical world" (1912c. 18-19). The biological strand of pragmatism and its stress on "control—of—the—environment—through—adaptation" are clearly pronounced in the citation above.

An understanding of the laws of social behaviour of men requires, Sarkar insisted, at every step an understanding of the laws of life and living organisms. "Biology is thus the true basis of Sociology and the science of History" (*ibid.* : 12).

The pragmatist notion of '*instrumentalism*' (of both James and Dewey) deeply influenced Sarkar. "Man as an individual or in groups has had but one function, and that is to transform the *givens* of world into which he is born, namely, *Nature and society*, into the instruments of *human and social welfare*. It is not Nature, region or geography that in the last analysis determines man's destiny. It is the human will, man's energy, that re-creates the topography and natural forces, humanizes the earth and spiritualizes, the geography. Then again, it is not the group, the clan, the nation or the society that ultimately forces the individual to submit to the social *milieu*, the group *mores*, the tradition, and the *status quo*. It is rather the individual personality that compels the *mores* to change and the *milieu* to break, that subverts *status quo* and re-forms the tradition" (Sarkar in Dass (ed.), 1940 : 352, first emphasis added).

Like the pragmatists, Sarkar too emphasised the notion of *pluralism*. He wrote in 1912 that the “destiny of each nation acts and is acted upon by the conjuncture of all the forces of Universe” (*ibid.* : 22). The recognition of a pluralistic universe appeared to Sarkar to be an important feature of the spirit of Young India, which showed, according to him, a keen awareness of and an acute sensitiveness to every world movement in art and literature, economics and politics and sought to mould its future with the help of diverse institutions, ideologies and movements. “The methodology and message of the pragmatists suit very well the life and disposition of the Indians eclectic as they are” (1922 : 169). The attitude of Young India appeared to Sarkar “practical and creative” since it engaged in utilising the world-forces (*viswa-shakti*) and examining the results achieved, since it refused to accept or acquiesce in the authority of any one individual, institution, movement or propaganda in industry, politics, literature or art, and since it envisioned national energy and sought to realise it in the forms of many leaders, diverse ideals, multiple organisations, and varied achievements. Sarkar confidently asserted, “The philosophy which interprets the world on the solid basis of actual results, which formulates truths and values according to the effects of ideas and institutions on life, which postulates the plurality and multiplicity of life’s experience, which has its cornerstone in the dignity of vital function as such, and which announces the supreme sacredness of individuals (whether as persons or as facts or events) is the only philosophy that can be consonant with the spirit of Young India” (*ibid.* : 169-170).

The same pragmatic emphasis on the plurality of forces working on human life, and on the choice and acceptance of ideas with reference to their workability in practical life evidenced above continued to influence Sarkar’s pronouncements in and about Independent India. “Idealists will”, he wrote, “have to educate the publicists and patriots of Dominion India to understand the new world-political forces and feel their impacts on India. The political categories

which were invented and popularized by Indians in order to counteract and militate against the British Empire cannot be useful and life-promoting today. British domination has formally ceased to exist in India.... The old categories and the old ways of thinking and administering will have to be replaced by new categories and new ways of thinking and administering" (1949 : 152).

The fundamental interests of life are, according to Sarkar, self-preservation and self-assertion (ibid. : 135). "The utilization of *viswa shakti* (world forces) in the interest of one's own self-assertion and progress is to remain the principal urge for each and every state, region, race, group or party throughout the world in the choice of its allies and enemies. This is the *Realpolitik* of Dominion India's orientations to Asian politics" (ibid. : 137).

Sarkar ever insisted on "transvaluation" of the "psychological and ethical values of the human personality" in the light of "objective realities about men and women based on statistical and comparative investigations" (ibid. : 166). It meant that Sarkar, like James, admitted of *relativism*. As if echoing James, he wrote, "জ্ঞানবিজ্ঞানের জগতে এমন কোন সিদ্ধান্ত নাই যার বিলকুল উলটা পক্ষ পাওয়া যায় না। প্রত্যেক নরনারীর পক্ষেই কিছু-না-কিছু 'ছাই-ভস্ম-মাথা-মুড়' আছেই আছে। আর প্রত্যেক লোকের মহা-সত্যও কোনো-না-কোনো লোকের চিন্তায় ছাই-ভস্ম-মাথা-মুড় ছাড়া আর-কিছু-নয়।" That is, in the world of knowledge, there is hardly any conclusion to which there is no radical opposition. Each man or woman has, in terms of knowledge, a notion of what is bogus and nonsensical, similarly, the great truth of each individual seems in the judgment of many others nothing but bogus and nonsensical (Sarkar in Mukhopadhyay, 1944 : 83). He unequivocally declared that there is no absolute truth in the world of knowledge nor is there any seer who has realised or can ever realise the whole truth or absolute truth (ibid. : 741). "আমার মতে দ্বন্দ্বার সব-কিছুই আপেক্ষিক" (That is, everything in this world is, to me, relative), said he. Each individual

can perceive only a part or parts of truth, the whole truth or ultimate truth always lying beyond his comprehension. Since the perception and experience of truth varies from one individual to another, there are as many truths as there are individuals. "There is no single, universal Truth, there are myriad truths of varied forms and character" ("সত্য একটা নয়—সত্য বহু, বিচির ধরণের ও বিচির গড়নের") (*idem*,. This notion of truth is pragmatist or, more particularly, Jamesian.

James' influence is also revealed in how Sarkar accepts the *veracity and variety of religious experiences*. James wrote, "On pragmaticistic principles, if the hypothesis of God works satisfactorily in the widest sense of the word, it is true" (1975 : 143). And Sarkar observed, "আত্মা ভগবান ইত্যাদি বস্তু কল্পনা করা মানুষের পক্ষে সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ কল্পনা নয়। এই সব তার হাজার কল্পনার অন্তর্মাত্র কল্পনামাত্র। এই সব কল্পনায় খারাপ কিছু নেই। মানুষের উপকারণ হতে পারে। কোন্ কল্পনায় কিছু বেশী উপকার আর কোন্ কল্পনায় কিছু কম উপকার হয় এক কথায় বলা কঠিন। সবই বিশ্লেষণ সাপেক্ষ।" That is, the imagination or notion of God, Soul, etc., is not man's best imagination or truest notion. It constitutes but a part, though a significant part, of his imagination of myriad varieties. There is nothing harmful in this imagination (of God or soul). It may even prove to be beneficial to man. It is difficult to suggest promptly and precisely which imagination is more beneficial and which one else is less. Everything requires analysis (Sarkar in Mukhopadhyay, 1944 208). Sarkar openly declared himself as a pluralist according importance to positivism or knowledge based on sensory experience as well as to transcendentalism (*ibid.* . 72).

Religion is, according to James, primarily a matter and necessity of life. It is a biological conception. Taking creeds and faith-state together as forming religions, we are obliged, he points out, 'on account of their extraordinary influence upon action and endurance, to class them amongst

the most important biological functions of mankind. Their stimulant and anaesthetic effect is so great that Professor Leuba...goes so far as to say that so long as men can *use* their God, they care very little who he is, or even whether he is at all 'The truth of the matter can be put', says Leuba, 'in this way. God is not known, he is not understood, he is used—sometimes as meat-purveyor, sometimes as moral support, sometimes as friend, sometimes as an object of love. If he proves useful, the religious consciousness asks for no more than that. Does God really exist? How does he exist? What is he? are so many irrelevant questions. Not God, but life, more life, a larger, richer, more satisfying life, is, in the last analysis, the end of religion. The love of life, at any and every level of development, is the religious impulse'" (James, 1902 : 496). Sarkar declared, "Men and women who do not feel strong without postulating God would produce almost the same philosophy of the Infinite and of the immortal soul if they happen to be intellectual... The effort to understand the nature of God or the relations between Man and the Divinity is the least part of a man's real religion. The *elan vital* of human life has always and everywhere consisted in the desire to live and in the power to flourish by responding to the thousand and one stimuli of the universe and by utilizing the innumerable world-forces" (1922 : 93).

The above remark was a near repetition of Sarkar's earlier remarks about the Chinese and Vedic religion. The humorous account of the Chinese invention of the art of cooking through a cumbersome process in the "Dissertation on Roast Pig" by Charles Lamb seemed to him to be a description of "the kind of thing the Celestials and Vedic Hindus were doing—discovering the rudiments of every desirable knowledge. And in the process of discovery they 'postulated' or *took for granted the spiritual Beings and Beings*—(has not the God of every race, at best, been only a postulate?)—who are *above the ordinary mortals and who are capable of helping them in their need*. They were thus looking 'through Nature up to Nature's God.' *Their religion was fundamentally the handmaid of Life*

and hence coincided fully with what we call *Kultur*" (1916 : 35 ; emphasis save that on *Kultur* added).

The sole 'truth' demanded by "religious experience is, for James, that "we can experience union with *something* larger than ourselves and in that union find our greatest peace" (*op. cit* : 515). This "*something greater*" is identified by both "philosophy, with its passion for unity, and mysticism with its monodeistic bent" with a unique and absolute God. But to meet man's 'practical needs', and the data of religious experience, it is sufficient to accept that for each 'individual' there exists a higher power with which he can become one and which is friendly to him. This higher power need not be solitary and infinite. It can even be seen as "only a larger and more god like self, of which the present self would then be but the mutilated expression, and the universe might conceivably be a collection of such selves, of different degrees of inclusiveness, with no absolute unity realised in it at all" (*idem*). Thus coming back again to the idea of pluralism, one finally arrives at the kind of "polytheism" which has, moreover, James adds, always been "the real religion of common people".

James thinks, "in fact, that a final philosophy of religion will have to consider the pluralistic hypothesis more seriously than it has hitherto been willing to consider it" (*ibid.* : 516). Sarkar, too, demanded a critical examination of the validity of the claim by the European students regarding the superiority of monotheism to every other faith. "Not only in Asia, but all over the world," he averred, "man has ever been a polytheist. Monotheism is a psychological absurdity. Both the physical organism and the nervous system of man predispose him to be a polytheist. Pluralism is the debt that every human being must pay to the flesh, the sense-organs ;—it is almost a physiological necessity" (1916 : 277). The view seems to contain a reflection of Jamesian biological psychology and physiology. One may hazard a similar affinity between James' *Reflex Action and Theism*, suggesting that God affords the most adequate object

of the three departments of mind, viz., sensory impression, reflection and action, corresponding to the sensory nerves, the brain and motor nerves, and Sarkar's treatment of religion and metaphysics as products of the brain and nervous system (cf. sup. 152-153).

It is a fact that man, said Sarkar, is a pluralist in every worldly field. He is a pluralist in all his social relations—economic, political and even domestic. "If in all affairs that affect the most vital interests of life man has been a pluralist, how is it that in the other-worldly affairs alone he is an advocate of monism, and the more concrete monotheism?" (*ibid.* : 278). One may, however, raise the question : Is there no unity underlying the psycho-physical system of human beings. "The reply is that this unity of individual personality is an abstraction.....But for all practical purposes, man must be treated not in the singular number but in the plural—as a bundle of sensations, perceptions, emotions, volitions, pleasures, pains, prejudices, superstitions, attitudes, relations, etc. And if there is to be a system of religious ideas, belief or faiths, it must have to be essentially composite, pluralistic and polytheistic—with a monistic or monotheistic under-current." (*idem*). All of the principal religio-ethical systems of Asia embody this synthesis between the one and the many. The varieties of religious experience of human beings are a veritable fact. "Strictly speaking in this world of ours there is no purely republican or purely despotic state just as there is no purely monotheistic or purely polytheistic people. In every field we meet with case of 'mixed system', toleration of diversities, reconciliation of opposites, and choice of the 'lesser evil' " (*ibid.* : 34 . emphasis added).

An interesting example of Sarkar's pluralistic view of religious experiences is furnished by his suggestion regarding the existence of "many Ramakrishnas" (vis-a-vis the various categories of devotees) other than the Ramakrishna as viewed by the recorder of *Ramakrishna-kathamrita* (Sarkar in Dass(ed.) 1940 : 512). And, in Sarkar's pragmatist assessment Ramakrishna's message was true in so far as it helped the listeners

"combat diffidence and acquire self-confidence in pursuit of life." (Sarkar, 1937 : 694). Similarly, the value of manifold activity of the Ramakrishna Mission initiated by Vivekananda and this fellow sannyasins lay in that it freed the Indians from the chains of inertia and the inferiority complex which they suffered from vis-a-vis the people of the west (Sarkar, in Dass, op. cit., : 517).

If Sarkar was somewhat Jamesian in relation to the issues above, he was greatly influenced by Dewey in his consideration of social and political issues. Like Dewey, Sarkar too was led by an express desire to avoid the consequences foretold in the truism that when thought gets hitched to political action, it tends strongly to become rigid, to ignore factual matters which would embarrass it by its changes. Indeed, such a situation goes into the explanation why Sarkar like Dewey had been, to borrow an expression from the vocabulary of the Americans, "mugwumpish" in politics, and why his concept of "action" was *not* linked with a sizable organization, a movement, a party with a chance at power. Sarkar appeared to have, like Dewey, a "manipulative active standpoint" (cf. Mills, 1966 : 394).

From this standpoint he might face the power problems, make overt judgments, take on a line—or, he might, as he actually did, ignore power issues, not see them, define issues around them, but never directly in their middle. "This latter is the Deweyan slant. It is accomplished (a) by continual selection of concrete examples which are in a power context or even clearly inter-human, (b) by becoming very formal, highly abstract in its...model of thought, 'adjustment', 'control of environment', (c) by refusing to formulate concrete socio-political ends, (d) by an infinitely pluralistic view of society, (e) by methodizing all such problems : i. e., rendering them formally soluble by 'intelligence'" (Mills, 1966 : 394).

Sarkar welcome Dewey's "pragmatic and straightforward thoughts" on liberty, democracy and national welfare, his criticism of the neglect of specific situations in the (then) current social thought, his repudiation of the notions of fixed

self and organic conception of society, his idea of freedom as consisting in efficiency in action, capacity to vary plans and carry them out, absence of thwarting and cramping obstacles to the exercise of free will. He agreed to Dewey's observation that "A world that is at times and points indeterminate enough to call out deliberation and to give play to choice to shape its future is a world in which will is free, not because it is inherently vacillating and unstable but because deliberation and choice are determining and stabilizing factors" (cited in Sarkar, 1928 : 303-304). He whole-heartedly subscribed to Dewey's "futuristic pragmatism" which suggested that in an experimental philosophy of life the question of the past, of precedents, of origins is quite subordinate to pre-vision, to guidance and control amid future possibilities.

Any theory or project that promises amelioration in the future deserves a fair trial. No theory or standard is sacred or inviolable simply because of its good performance in the past. Any norm or standard or any existing institution would have to be judged by the "authority of life". Life is always changing and it necessitates a choice of adopting a more or less intelligent and significant custom, i. e., significant in relation to the changed and changing circumstances. "The very fact that the life of an individual or a group can be regulated by many other than the standardised norms or conventional modes to which tradition is used challenges the despotism of infallibility of any recognised system of social or political absolutism" (*ibid.* : 318). Sarkar was thus thoroughly opposed to absolutism or monism of any kind and insisted on taking a pluralist view of things. Pluralism rests fundamentally on the idea that the 'real' is hardly ever general, universal or absolute but essentially individual, personal and 'relative' " (*idem*).

Sarkar appeared relentless to those who would adopt a one-sided approach towards the social and psychological phenomena. He cited the view of Jung that "involuntary one-sidedness, i. e., inability to be anything but one-sided is a sign of barbarism". If in psychology he cherished the idea

of Gestalt, in sociology he advocated "the habitual employment of this pluralism in the scientific analysis of all individual reactions and inter-individual responses, i. e., group attitudes, social contacts, institutions and so forth" (Sarkar, 1941 : 25).

A social reformer or a town-planner, or, in a word, anybody who is concerned with socio-psychological phenomena, is required "to submit to the pluralistic analysis of instincts, urges, drives or ambitions in order that the social causality may be realistically set forth" (*ibid.* : 77). Monism, or the view that "one factor...is so predominant that it is the causal force", stands negated in this perspective. (cf. Dewey, 1939, *Freedom and Culture*, cited in Mills, 1966 : 426).

Sarkar's criticism of the monism or absolutism which he thought was implicit in Marxism partook of the nature of Dewey's polemic against Marxism. Marxism was conceived by Dewey as absolutism, as a monistic "block-universe theory of social causation", and as reducing "the human factor as nearly as possible to zero" (quoted in Mills, loc. cit.). Dewey aimed not at denying "the role of economic factors in society nor at denying the tendency of the present economic regime to produce consequences adverse to democratic freedom. These things are rather taken for granted. Criticism aims to show what happens when this undeniable factor is isolated and treated as the cause of *all* social change" (Dewey, quoted in Mills, 1966 : 427). Sarkar who believed in a "pluralistic conception of culture" wrote, "In order to avoid misconceptions it should be pointed out that in this pluralism economic forces are given their due but naturally not as the sole or exclusive determinants" (Sarkar, 1941 : 78).

To Sarkar Monism is alias determinism. And, he opposed all determinism whether it should be the "economic determinism of Marx" or the "omnipotent societarianism of Durkheim" (*ibid.* : 129) or "kama-monism or sexological determinism" of Freud and his followers (*ibid.* : 161). He agreed that the use of psychoanalysis by the historian and

and the sociologist might uncover many of the causes of our modern discontents. "But as in regard to other principles of interpretation of causation, in the psychoanalytical field also the sociologist will have to avoid the much-too easy pitfall of monistic determinism" (*ibid.* : 162-163). Realities are, according to him, multiplex and have to be accounted for by a plurality of circumstances.

"In almost every instance a 'plurality of causes' has to be admitted, and can be circumstantially proved. Likewise is it reasonable to admit in most cases 'the intermixture of effects'. This also can very often be concretely demonstrated. The highest that we are justified in claiming in the analysis of causes, preconditions or favouring circumstances is that one or a group of factors happens to be more dominant than the others The simultaneous operation of ideological, political and economic forces is invariably to be accepted as the scientifically tenable position except under rare conditions" (*ibid.* : 147). Sarkar did not, however, explain the nature of the rare conditions where one might dispense with the consideration of simultaneous operation of multiple forces ; nor did he suggest any way of determining or weighing the relative dominance of a factor or a group of factors.

This pluralistic view of the nature of societal phenomena results in the case of Sarkar, as in the case of Dewey (cf. Mills, 1966 : 395), a somewhat "monistic" view of intelligence. The 'pluralism' gives cogency to the views in a society with an increasing division of labour and heterogeneity. The monistic paradigm of intelligence, by which all problems are to be solved, offers a "common ground", a point of mediation. Dewey emphasized the role of *Creative Intelligence* in the development of a social order wedded to scientific progress (cf. Mills, 1966 : 433). Sarkar too talked of the "creativity of the individual,—his creative will and intelligence" as an important force fashioning out the course of society (Sarkar, 1942 : 127). The "creative individual's liberty of choice and freedom of action must not be ignored as a matter of

course. It is because of this creativity of the individual, the intelligence of man as the Kantian 'moral person' that we are in sympathy with *l' impulsion vitale*...stressed by Espinas...and ...Bergson's *elan vital*. The ideal is independent of the society, the environment, the so-called objective circumstances. Indeed, according to Espinas, to the very origin of the reality the ideal contributes its quota. *The individual and the intelligence are to be claimed as independent (although not exclusive) factors in social metabolism*" (ibid. : 128 ; emphasis added).

The groups in their "plurality and heterogeneity" including the state are always recognized as human creations and creative agents in adventures and experiments of men in societies. "*But the senior partner or determinant and grand transformer in socio-cultural dynamics or evolution is the individual*" (ibid. : iv ; emphasis added). This recognition of creativity or creative intelligence or creative will of the individual in human affairs provided a ground of *mediation* between Sarkar's justification of multiplicity, variety and novelty of the opinions, organisations and movements challenging the stability and sterility of the moribund tradition in countries like India, on the one hand, and his emphasis on a universal (and abstract) goal of scientific and industrial advancement of mankind and the potentiality of backward peoples like the Indians for the same, on the other. With his pluralistic notion of human nature as a constellation of various instincts and urges and abilities he would ensure the similarity of personalities and societies. With it he could combat the typological theories that appeared to him suggestive of an oriental or rural personality or society totally excluding the qualities of an allegedly diametrically opposite and equally exclusive, occidental or urban personality or society. "*The plurality of instincts and drives as well as the plurality of social forces or causes are to be accepted in every interpretation of locality patterns, social metabolism in villages and towns, as well as rural reconstruction. These pluralities are, besides, universal in their incidence. Their validity is patent as much in East as in West...[The] process of social*

metabolism has always to be understood in the perspective of such plural-instincted, diverse-*gestaltet* and hetero-determined men and women" (*ibid.* : 83, emphasis added).

There are, according to Sarkar, four "fundamental instincts" in the "pluralistic make-up of the human personality". He considered "instincts, desires, interests, ambitions, passions, urges, drives, etc. almost as synonymous categories" (*ibid* : 79). The first one of these four "instincts" is *kama* (sex). The second instinct is that of *kanchana* (gold or wealth). It is the possessional, acquisitive or proprietary instinct. The third one is the instinct of *kirti* (fame, reputation). It denotes "domination, conquest or power instinct." The last instinct is that of *karma* (work, action or creation) and stands for the "creational or creative" instinct.

Every human attitude or behaviour is the result of conjoint working of more than one of the above four instincts, though each one of them may not invariably and to the same extent or degree be present in each and every case. Each instinct leads to a related set of ideas, ideals, institutions and activities of men. "*Kama* leads to family (and society or social organization). The results of the *kanchana* instinct are economic (as well as social) activities and institutions. The state, law, politics, society and allied forms and relations of human life are derived from the *kirti* urges. And the instinct of *Karma* is responsible for the arts and crafts, sciences and philosophies, inventions, discoveries, myths, religious rites, ceremonies, etc...." (*ibid.* : 81). This configuration of "instincts" in human personality is marked by an overwhelming emphasis on mundane and material aspects of life. But what is more noteworthy is how the notion of *karma* is used by Sarkar to mediate between the pursuit of worldly desires and that of spiritual or religious goals. Since every personality has this instinct of *karma*, no human personality (and, for that matter, no epoch, stage, sub-epoch of human development and no society) can be exclusively "sacred" or exclusively "secular", exclusively "ideational" or exclusively "sensatist", exclusively rural or agricultural or exclusively urban or industrial;

"every personality is simultaneously both and... every collectivity is likewise both at one and the same moment" (ibid.: 337).

With the mediation of "fundamental unity of the human make-up" (Sarkar, 1922 : 108) as always consisting in a plurality of "instincts" and negating the monism of either transcendentalism or the pursuit of worldly desires, Sarkar sought to establish a "rapprochement" in the ideals of life and thought in the east and the west (ibid. : 99), the "pragmatic identity of life" in the Hindu and Sakyān, Christian, and Confucian ethico-moral orders (ibid. : 102). This mediation bolstered his attack on such race prejudices as would suggest the other-worldly nature of the Hindus (and other oriental peoples) and their incompetence for worldly affairs and their inferiority to the western in practical wisdom. Like a pragmatist historian Sarkar took pains to reinterpret the Indian past with relevance to the mood of modernity (radiating from the west) and picked out of the past those characters and events that would most easily make for optimism and lyric upsurge. With a conception of human nature that ever aims at establishing Heaven on earth and at the same time the discovery of the eternal in the ephemeral or the transient, Sarkar sought to demonstrate in the *positive background* of the Hindu society and culture such an "idealism as is pragmatic enough to recognize the equal validity of diverse factors or elements in our *conciienza* (conscience) and *azioni* (actions), as does n't consider any single motive by itself to be sufficient for human life and refuses to recognize in this or that particular tendency the intimate essence or supreme law of human nature" (Sarkar, 1937a : 26-27 ; emphasis on English words added).

This pragmatist approach of Sarkar towards the socio-political phenomena is vulnerable to all the infirmities which pragmatism in general suffers from. First, what Mills told about Dewey's pragmatism applies equally validly to Sarkar's. "As method, pragmatism is", Mills pertinently remarked, "over-stuffed with imprecise social value; as a socio-political

orientation, it undoubtedly has a tendency toward opportunism. It is really *not* opportunist, because in the very statement of method there lies the assumptions (sic) of the Jeffersonian social world. It is quite firmly anchored. But in lesser hands than Dewey's [and, one may add here, Sarkar's] many things may happen" (1963 : 167 : parenthesis added). Then, pragmatism, by calling itself pluralist, revealed, as if *ab initio*, its weakness as a philosophical system. "Thought is acknowledged to be incapable of overcoming the diversity and contradictions inherent in reality. This, however (according to the empiricist position), is precisely its task" (Cuvillier, 1983 : xxi).

The readers of Sarkar's analyses of sociopolitical realities may have the disquieting feeling as to how forcefully this criticism applies to them.

What Durkheim finds in pragmatism is no less than *intellectual anomie*, in the sense that there is insufficient regulation of that which passes for truth in society. The crucial test of truth is, according to the pragmatists, the action which leads to a state of 'satisfaction'. Satisfaction has presumably a psychological, or as Schiller, the pragmatist from Oxford, would have called, a 'personal' reference. "Should we not (in that case) conclude that truth is essentially individual and consequently *incommunicable and untranslatable*, since translating it means expressing it in concepts and thus impersonally" (Durkheim, 1983 : 56 ; parenthesis added). If Sarkar taking an extremely pragmatist position prided himself on the originality of his views and their contradiction with the opinions held in general (Sarkar in Mukhopadhyay 1944 : 176), accorded equal validity to the plethora of opinions of the multiplicity individuals (*ibid*: 741), suspected conspiracy whenever two persons made efforts to reach an agreement (Sarkar, 1928 : 1), how could he ascertain that the constructions made by different individuals including himself were not purely illusory? How can the knowledge which we have, which meets our personal satisfactions, become "the common treasure of humanity"

(Durkheim, op. cit. : 56) ? What would be the basis upon which this personal truth becomes acceptable "impersonally" ?

The pragmatists envisaged, of course, an ideal possibility of the convergence of individual opinions, ensured through the acceptance of the view of a person with the widest and best organised experience by the rest. But, since all experience and all judgments are personal matters, the experience of others is, one may argue, valid for them but not for me. It is observed, in the second place, that everyone feels himself stronger and more useful if he acts in concert with others. But the usefulness of joint action implies shared views, judgments and ideas, "The Pragmatists have not disregarded this. The difficulty is that..... the pragmatist theses run the risk of making us see as true that which conforms to our desires. In order to overcome this difficulty, we should have to agree to see the general opinion....as an authority capable of silencing the differences between individuals and of countering the particularism of individual points of view" (Durkheim, 1983 : 73).

While pragmatism is beset with the above difficulties, it created certain specific problems for Sarkar while he tried to apply it in his socio-political analysis. He carried, it appears, the elements of relativism, pluralism and mediation in pragmatism to their extremities and it resulted in a series of problems and contradictions in his socio-political ideas and analysis, many of which have been noted in the foregoing pages of this work (cf. also Bandyopadhyay, 1984 : 160-161). In his bid to remain faithful to the pluralistic or multiplex reality which always combines in varying measures diverse elements, many of which may even be contradictory with one another, Sarkar rendered himself incapable of providing any taxonomy of socio-political phenomena or processes or any precise explanation of the same. He never saw, to take an example, any hard and fast line between a democracy and despotic regime or "despotocracy", since both

consent of and coercion on the governed are present, of course, in varying degrees in any and every polity, or, since, to quote his words, "Democratic and despotocratic tendencies operate together at the same time in modification of each other in every political form and relationship" (C.R.Jan.1939 : 89). Hence, he coined the term demo-despotocracy in order to mediate between the concepts of democracy and despotocracy and better depict the reality. He sought in the same vein a mediation between the notions of capitalism, socialism or democracy and the changing and complex realities in the addition of the prefix, neo, to each one of them. But these exercises in terminological innovation or "mediation" have landed him in difficulties. If pragmatism has been castigated in Marxian critique as a doctrine rendering encouragement to European fascism (cf. Horowitz, 1966 : 24), Sarkar's failure to see any distinction between democracy and fascism or between fascism and socialism as advocated by the Marxists rendered him all the more vulnerable to the charge of siding with fascism. Because of his extreme attachment to pluralism, Sarkar found all the (then) available sociological theories to be inadequate on this or that ground and could not patiently and systematically pursue any one of them. What one gets, as a result, in his writings appears hardly any better than "free wheeling social analysis drawing upon diverse intellectual traditions, without attention either to a controlled data base or to a cumulative analytical rigour", which characterized, of course, the pursuit of sociology and anthropology in Calcutta, Bombay or Lucknow during that time (Saberwal, 1983 : 303).

The above difficulties notwithstanding, pragmatism and pluralism helped Sarkar in approaching socio-cultural phenomena and ideas about them in several ways. It made him critical of the ideas of the western thinkers including anthropologists and sociologists. His dissatisfaction with the ideas of a thinker led him to search better alternatives and the process resulted in his familiarity with a wide variety of ideas and theories. His audience was, consequently,

sensitized to a plurality of thoughts and theories from the east and the west. At the same time, Sarkar's excoriation of the ideas of the western thinkers warned it against an enthusiastic and uncritical acceptance of the ideas imported from the west. Why this caution went unheeded to by the Indian practitioners of sociology who remained contented "to live the life of an intellectual imitator" (Madan, 1956 : 10) is, however, a different question. Then, with the postulate of a pluralistic make-up of human mind all over the world, Sarkar could challenge the stereotypical notion of the exclusively other-worldly temperament of the Hindus or Indians. He took enormous pains to prove that culture and society in India were composed of many diverse elements all of which were never moulded in a single cast. The plurality of social segments and values within it and the resultant tension which propelled it to action was highlighted by Sarkar with his doctrine of pluralism. And, in his pragmatist analysis the Indians who were painted by many others to have been timeless, changeless beings, appeared like their fellow beings in the west, to be worldly wise and pragmatic enough to accommodate the new elements which they might have met and found useful for their own purposes.

CHAPTER VI

SEARCH FOR INDIA

At the threshold of his scholarly career Sarker highlighted the specificity of the Indian or Hindu way of life. He believed at that time that each civilisation is the expression of a specific spirit or ideal. He contrasted the Greek civilisation with the civilisation of the Hindus and the European way of life with that of the Indians (cf the conclusion of Sarker's *Prachin Griser Jatiya Sikhsa* B. S. 1317 (1910) which appeared in a slightly modified form in "Greek O Hindu" (The Greek and the Hindu) in *Aitihasik Pravandha*, 1912: 27-40, and also "Europe O Bharat" (Europe and India) in *Aitihasik Pravandha*. 1912). He warned that "এক সমাজের নিয়ম আর এক সমাজের পক্ষে হানিকর হইতে পারে", i.e., the codes and customs of one society may prove to be harmful for another society and hence forbade the Indians to blindly emulate the European system in every respect. He was then convinced that "ইউরোপ ও ভারত দুই ঠিক এক পথের পথিকও নয়, গন্তব্য স্থানও এক নয়।" i.e., the routes as well as the destinations were not exactly the same for Europe and India (1912 : 112-3). The essential difference lay in that in ancient Greece the totality of universe was exhaustively defined by the activities of men on this earth. Similarly, the ideal and civilisation of Europe were exclusively devoted to the external world and material success or development.

Since to the Greeks the life of man was exclusively determined by this-worldly activities, each of them sought the realisation of perfection of his life and efforts in the span of a single life or birth and within the narrow confines of this-worldly pursuits. Each individual was, therefore, anxious to resolve the contradictions and conflicts that were rooted in the imperfection and incompleteness of his daily life through a persistent emphasis on a relatively

encompassing unity in life on this earth and did not bother very much if he had to sacrifice individual autonomy and variety in the process. As a result, the search for harmony overriding all the differences and diversities became the most pronounced feature of the Greek notion of beauty. And, this specific notion of beauty came to be reflected in the dominance of polis in almost every aspect of life of the citizens, the marked stress on symmetry and shapeliness of figures in sculpture and painting, the emphasis on the role of gymnastics and music in education, the love of music as an efficacious agency for training the mind of the young and easing out the tensions and conflicts therein. Life independent of and/or outside the polis was inconceivable for the Greeks. They sought to promote unity, harmony and interdependence of individuals by directing the life of each citizen along the line leading to the goal of the polis. Thus, to submerge the small, personal biographies in the wider life of the polis was, according to Sarkar, a major feature of the culture and civilisation in ancient Greece.

The essential core of the Indian culture and civilisation was, Sarkar averred, completely different from the above. In ancient India the mark of grace or beauty in life lay not in the sacrifice of individual autonomy and variety but in the full blossoming of the distinctiveness of individual soul. The life of the individual was, thought the Hindus, not concluded by one birth or his present birth or life and by the activities in this world. It spanned many other births, past and future, and the world beyond this earth. This faith in the transmigration of the soul or rebirth and in the other world ensured for the Hindus freedom from the anxiety of somehow reaching or effecting unity or uniformity that would rule out all the differences, dissensions and conflicts which might arise in life on this earth. Since they knew that everything in this life and in this finite world was imperfect and an expression of only one aspect of the infinite moving through eternity and the cosmos of which this world was but a part, they were not afraid of,

but hospitable to, the manifestation of endless diversities and the resultant incongruities in this-worldly affairs. The Hindus believed that true freedom consisted in self-direction and self-control and everything that was controlled not by one's own self but by others as well as any situation where one was overtaken by passions or desires and thus lost restraint over one's own self was the source of never-ending sufferings. The ultimate goal of a Hindu was salvation or freedom from the bondage of worldly desires.

The Hindu social system has been attuned to these notions of finite world at the present moment as a part of an infinite existence in eternity, of rebirth and the other world and these values of freedom and diversity. The different asramas or different stages or orders of life of an individual, the different varnas or castes with their respective rights and obligations were oriented to the varying requirements of different individuals at various stages of material and spiritual development. The role of state or political power was defined and limited by the society. The individual was not made subservient to the state or political power. There were many aspects of life that remained totally outside or independent of the realm of political power. The non-competitive economic system of caste guaranteeing the individual the freedom of pursuing his own caste occupation without interference from others, the cooperative principle of social life ruling out such interference, the relative emphasis on striving for the liberation of the individual soul from the chain of worldly desires or petty selfish interests made the intervention of the state redundant even in the economic sphere.

Therefore, the rise or decline of political power never seriously disturbed the continuity in social life of the Hindus. The respect for individuality and toleration of diversities were reflected in the Hindu art and literature as well. If the figures in the Hindu paintings and sculpture betrayed a lack of symmetry in their different parts or even a sort of niggardliness, it was because the Hindus, secure in the

Knowledge of the existence of a wider and bigger whole ever encouraging diversities and also reconciling them, did not bother it. Every imperfection is but an expression of an aspect of a greater perfection. And, the individual soul should have the full liberty to proceed in his own way towards this perfection, towards salvation. Precisely for this reason, the varying educational systems and the diverse systems of thought, the general stream of civilisation of the Hindus could continue through millenia and issue forth in ever new forms of vitality in consonance with the demands of new epochs in the face of the heaviest of odds.

The sum and substance of the argument above, i. e., that the Hindu or Indian culture gave precedence to spiritualism and consequently undermined the pursuit of material prosperity was repeated in the last essay of *Itihasik Pravandha*, viz., "Europe O Bharat". The European civilisation was, the essay suggested, dominated by mammonism and crass materialism, inequalities and strife. It hardly made any sincere attempt at the cessation of hostilities arising out of conflicts of material interests and the attainment of spiritual tranquillity. But the narration of specificities of the two civilisations and ways of life was tempered here with an advocacy of reconciliation of the two. The Indians were, through the Europeans, introduced to the fruits of the industrial civilisation including the printing press, post and telegraph, railways and newspapers which helped them come closer to one another than ever before and establish kinship with the world outside. The ideas of nationalism and political unity and political freedom were likewise the contribution of Europe to the Indian culture. The Indians came to appreciate, thanks to the Europeans, that "পার্থি'র জীবনেরও উন্নতি প্রয়োজন—অর্থ" একেবারে অনথে'র মূল নহে—জড় বিজ্ঞানেরও আবশ্যিকতা আছে—রাজনৈতিক বিষয়েরও উন্নতি প্রয়োজন", i. e., success or progress in material life also is necessary—money is not simply the root of all evils—there is a need for natural sciences also—organisation and advancement in political

life are equally important (Sarkar, 1912 : 127). They would, therefore, strive to master the techniques of the industrial and scientific civilisation of Modern Europe to drive away misery and poverty from their material life. They would not, however, Sarkar hoped, forget and forsake their glorious tradition of spiritualism. On the contrary, science would prove in their hands to be the handmaiden of religion or spiritualism. Having been fortified in their material life with the help of science and industry, the Indians would sincerely try to help the modern world including Europe in the spiritualization of its life.

A further modification of Sarkar's idea of the spirituality of the Hindus or Indians and the materialism of the Europeans or occidentals is evidenced in his famous lecture, "Vidyalay Dharmasiksha" (cf. *Siksha Samalochana* [Educational Observations], 1912 : 97-124 ; or "The pedagogy of the Hindus" in *The Collegian*, Calcutta, 1912). The main thrust of the essay was succinctly presented by Radhakamal Mukerjee in the following words : "In this utilitarian age, when the art of living is forgotten, when machinery is killing souls and mechanism is destroying spirituality there clearly rings out of the message of India to humanity that the human spirit can only come to its own under a pedagogic ideal and system of training that are still living among the Indian people. The mysteries of human psychology and the infinite possibilities of development of which the human mind is capable can be learnt not through psychological treatises or theological discourses but are realised as the soul soars along the limitless vistas unfolded by the impulse from a divine master.... if the end is not mere efficient living, if the purpose of teaching is to bring more out of man than to put more into him, the highest ideal will be realised not by mechanical practice but by the Hindu pedagogic system in which the relation between masters and pupils is one of personal love, devotion and confidence. 'Responsibility of one single individual for the development of a man's soul' is thus the highest form of training....."

(*Modern Review*, April 1913 ; reprinted in Dass (ed.), 1940 : 12-13).

What is, however, most noteworthy in the essay is a striking emphasis on the efficacy of the Hindu pedagogic system in promoting also the "outward efficiency or success" of learners in the material world.

It is an unmistakable sign of Sarkar's gradual realisation of the unpalatable fact that over-emphasis on spiritualism and other-worldliness of the Hindus led to a total undermining of the record of their achievements in the material life. To correct the mistake he raised the questions : "Was that system [of education of the Hindus] essentially monastic and ascetic, and did it kill all secular and social instincts of the learners ? Did the *Brahmacharis* come out from the preceptors' homes merely as monks, missionaries, and sanyasis ? Could they not satisfy the diverse material wants of men ?" (cited by Sarkar in PBHS, 1914 : xii). These are palpably leading questions. "The graduates trained up under the 'domestic system' were," wrote Sarkar, "competent enough to found and administer states, undertake industrial and commercial enterprises ; they were builders of empires and organisers of business concerns. It was because of this all-round and manly culture that the people of India could organise vast schemes of colonisation and conquest, and not content with being confined within the limits of mother India, could build up a Greater India beyond the seas, and spread culture, religion and humanity among the subject races" (*idem*). The Hindus made, according to him, remarkable progress in architecture, sculpture, medicine, dyeing, weaving, shipping, navigation, military tactics and implements and many other aspects of material life with the help of the knowledge of physical and natural sciences which they learnt obviously in the domestic system. It was, again under this system of education that an ideal Hindu king "protected himself but not through fear ; followed the dictate of religion, but not through remorse ; realised revenues, but not through greed ; and enjoyed happiness, but not through

attachment.'’ While the system produced great Rishis, scholars, both male and female, it gave birth as well to monarchs and kings from Chandragupta Maurya to Shivaji and also to gallant and eminent women like Ahalya Bai and Rani Bhawani. Thus, encouragement to the simultaneous and harmonious pursuit of spiritual goals and mundane interests was according to Sarkar, the specific feature of the pedagogy of the Hindus which has “continuously kept up the genial stream of national culture and civilisation through diverse forms and agencies by giving rise to hosts of thinkers and actors capable of solving different problems in different ages” (*idem*).

The *Kavyas*, *Natyas*, *Kathas*, *Puranas*, *Tantras*, *Itihasas*, *Vastuvidyas*, *Silpasastras*, *Arthasastras*, *Nitisastras*, *Dharma-sutras* and *Smritis* of the Hindus reveal that “the synthesis of world’s permanent polarities has been concretely demonstrated and manifested in the ever-moving gradations of the social polity known as *Varnasrama*, the Hymeneal rites and marriage rules, the Joint Family, the Cottage Industry, the autonomous system of cooperative village Commonwealths, the *Acharyyakulas*, the *Parishats*, the clastic theological apparatus and religious paraphernalia, the institution of kingship, and the doctrine of mandala or sphere of international activity that constitute the complex web of Indian life” (*ibid.*, : xiv). Thus from extolment of spiritualism as the unique feature of the Hindu life Sarkar came to focus on the synthesis of and harmony between the positive or worldly and the spiritual or transcendental, “the मोग (Enjoyment) and त्यग (Renunciation)” as evinced in works like *Raghuvamsam* by the “great Hindu Poet”, Kalidasa. Sociology of Indian life would have been more enriched if Sarkar explained the character of this synthesis. How and when was this synthesis attained ? To which extent was it achieved ? Did it continue throughout the history of India ? Or, was there a cut or discontinuity in the pursuit of this synthesis ? If so, under what specific conditions ?

Sarkar did not systematically work out the answers

to the above questions. Instead, he concentrated in his later life more and more on the material achievements of the Hindus of ancient and mediaeval India. He read in the one-sided and exaggerated emphasis on the spiritualism of the Hindus an implied calumny that they were weaklings in the domain of worldly pursuits. He engaged, therefore, in a vigorous search for counterevidences of all sorts to the these: of the western scholars on the other-worldliness of the Hindus or Indians, their lack of unity at the macro level, their parochialism, their lack of adaptability to changes, and the stationariness in their outlook and of their social organisation. The importance of the corrective which Sarkar sought to provide to the prevailing note of quietistic despair in explanations of the (pre-Muslim) Indian *weltanschauung* can hardly be overestimated. If the articulate eschatology of the guardians of the sacred tradition, Hindu or Buddhist, produced this note, other notes were also, as van Buitenen legitimately remarked, sounded, and one would be thoroughly unjustified in not listening to them. If one reads these texts least afflicted by the moralists—the poetry, especially lyrical poetry and the vast literature of tales and romances,—one gets a different image of the civilised Indian life. “There was a delight in living, an artistic sensitiveness, a cool headed drive to make good in the world, and an air of cultural sophistication in the enjoyment of the rewards of prosperity...far removed from the stern disenchantment of the sages...” (van Buitenen, 1959 : 99). H. v. Buitenen based his analysis on Vidyadhara stories or Vidyadhara tales in the works like the Brhatkatha or the Kathasaritsagara. Madan too cautions his readers not to get carried away by the striking ideas of ‘renunciation’ and ‘purity’ which dominate the academic literature on India (Madan, 1987).

If the reminder that the Hindu tradition offers a rich and sensible philosophy of life in this world has to be issued even today, Sarkar’s expatiation on the Hindus’ “Vikramadityan grasp of this mundane sphere” seems to have been more than justified seventy years back and in a milieu of political

subjugation. It ensures for him the status of a pioneer in Indian sociology. The problem with him was that he appeared to have slowly been overtaken by an obsession with discovering parallelisms of the features of occidental life characterised by material success in the life of the Hindus or Indians. It may however appear difficult to brush aside Sarkar's search for parallelisms in the light of the following observation by Singer. "The universally human is easier to find in the sophisticated Sanskrit tales which van Buitenen analyzes. His characterization of the hero of these tales—as a man intellectually resourceful, dependable, ever ready to relinquish his worldly possessions—not only brings to mind some basic cultural themes in Indian literature but also suggests a kinship with some culture heroes of Europe and America" (Singer, 1959 : xiv). It became almost compulsive for Sarkar to prove the equality of Indians with their western masters in capacities for success in the material world and in the adaptability of their culture and social structure to the changes necessitated by this success.

II

The strictly ritual restrictions on travel, the strong closure of local cultures against the strangers, the lack of "a speech community" comprising both the literati and the laity in India prevented, according to Weber (1967), the growth of "nationalistic feelings" in the country. This observation by Weber would appear to many a sophisticated expression or "ration-alisation" of the general notion of the erstwhile colonial masters from Europe regarding the unsuitness of the people of India for a nation of their own—the countless cleavages among them stood in the way of their political unity and independence. In reply to this Sarkar would readily point out the "Unity and Diversity in Indian National Life" (PBHS, 1914 : Section 4 : 15-16). Not only did he refer to the ambition of the heroes in the Indian epics for digvijaya or conquest of the four quarters but he cited several instances of "country-states or imperial organisations" from the ancient and

mediaeval history of India. These larger and more celebrated empires and kingdoms of the Hindus, viz., the Maurya Empire (4th and 3rd c B. C.), the Gupta Empire, the empire of Harshavardhana, the empire of the Chalukyas and Rashtrakutas in the Deccan, the empire of the Cholas in Southern India beyond the Deccan, the empire of the Palas and their successors at Gauda in Bengal, et ali, flourished through over two millenia of recorded history and “in conditions of physical environment as varied as possible in a country like India, the ‘epitome of the world’ ”. The types of political organisation evidenced in the Indian history must be more or less “diversified in character to meet the requirements of peoples living under diverse geographical or topographical influences” (*ibid.* : 7). And, one would naturally expect a multiplicity of political codes or *Nitisasthas* or manuals of government rules. But one is struck, Sarkar pointed out, with some “floating ideas” which are common to almost all these treatises and seem to have been the stock-in-trade of every writer on *Niti*. These “verbatim reproduction” or occasional modifications and adaptations of the same text are, according to him, not difficult to explain. “The language of the learned was the same throughout India” (*ibid.* : 15). Education was imparted orally, and ideas were transmitted through generations from mouth to mouth. Besides, “the incessant political change of the times also promoted a uniformity of culture” (*idem*). Dynastic revolutions, territorial expansion and contraction, shifting of royal seats from one place to another, rise of new areas into political importance, “constant transformations of the ‘old order yielding place to new’—all these tended to produce an elasticity and flexibility of the Indian mind *ever ready to receive new impressions* by facilitating *rapprochement* and intercourse among the people” (*idem*; the first emphasis added). Thus, the toleration of heterogeneous ideas and patterns of action by the Hindus, their accommodation of diversities strengthened the socio-cultural unity of India.

But beneath these unities and uniformities lie the varieties and diversities which are the “characteristic products of

particular epochs and areas". A close scrutiny of the political maxims embodied in the various branches of the Hindu literature would in Sarkar's opinion, yield "not only a history of the *development* of polity and political speculation in India through the ages, but also a record of varying geographical influences bearing upon it" (*idem*).

This characteristic of the Indian national culture "in its socio-political aspects, viz., *the super-imposition, upon a fundamental hed-rock of uniformity, of a diversity adjusted to the conditions of varying localities and relative to the changes in the dynamic world-forces*" had been time and again reiterated by Sarkar (*idem* : emphasis added). Sarkar thus anticipated the analysis by Nehru (1947) or Saberwal (1982) of palimpsest-like quality of Indian society and culture. India appeared to Nehru "like some ancient palimpsest on which layer upon layer of thought and reverie had been inscribed, and yet no succeeding layer had completely hidden or erased what had been written previously" (1950 : 46). Saberwal too talked of the "palimpsest quality" of the Indian society manifested in its capacity to absorb layer upon layer of "new codes" and its corresponding ahistoric both/and logic that the western scholars like Weber found difficult to understand and fit into the either/or logic of their western type of historic thinking. Focussing on this quality of the socio-cultural entities in India served a dual purpose of Sarkar. With the idea of everpreparedness of the Indian socio-cultural complex to accommodate changes he could explain its continuity through the past and destroy the picture of its stationariness. He could also confidently predict its success in industrialising or modernising itself. "Generally, the process of modernization is accretive, assimilative and adaptive" (Singh, 1986 : 77). The socio-cultural process in India appears in Sarkar's analysis just the same. Interestingly enough, the empirical observations of the Indian sociologists during the 1960s and 1970s were "unanimous that traditional social institutions, structures and beliefs in India would be able to assimilate

the roles, structures and values required for *modernization*" (ibid. : 78).

Sarkar's analysis of the "relativity of national ideals and institutions in India modifying the traditional unifying agencies" suggests a constant interaction of, to use an expression of today, Great Tradition and Little Tradition. "The kaleidoscopic political changes" which shifted the seats of power from people to people and from one region to another necessarily converted the border-lands or buffer-states of one epoch into the dominant centres of political and cultural life in the next and "*occasionally diverted the stream of paramount ideas along new and untrodden channels*" (op. cit. : 16 ; emphasis added). Sarkar regretted the paucity of historical details regarding this process of elevation of numerous local or parochial social and cultural traits to the level of "great tradition" or "universal" or national institutions and values. "On the other hand, the translation of higher culture into the tongues of the people of the various parts from the common store house of Sanskrit, the *lingua franca* of educated India, through the ages and the necessary modifications or adaptations, have imparted a local colouring and distinctive tone to the all India Hindu traditions, sentiments and customs in the several parts of the country" (*idem*).

Sarkar was, thus, perceptive enough to point out the role of, to use Marriott's coinage, universalisation and parochialisation in the Indian culture. "Social and religious life of the people of India have thus been for ages governed not simply by the texts of the Sāstras in Sanskrit (which by the bye, could not escape the natural adaptation to the conditions of time and place), but also really and to a powerful extent by the vast mass of different vernacular literature, both secular and religious, that grew up side by side with, and eventually replaced, to a considerable extent, the original storehouse" (*idem* ; emphasis added). The cleft separating the literary culture or great Sanskritic tradition from all popular culture had thus never been, as Weber complained (op. cit. : 341), very wide. The literati essaying the sastras had to reckon

with the relativities of time and place as well as the moods of the folk and reorient the former accordingly. Subsequent writers agree that it is "an enduring characteristic of Indian thinking, even of the highest order, that it never loses contact with popular conceptions and beliefs, but returns time and again to find new inspiration in the immediate experiences of everyday life" (van Buitenen, 1959 : 99). This fact has been responsible for constant enrichment of the Indian tradition but has at the same time created difficulties for scholars in "discriminating from the permanent and basic foundations of unifying thought and tradition the layers and sediments that point to different epochs and diverse local conditions in Indian culture history..." (PBHS 1914 : 16). Sarkar faced the problem most acutely in his attempt at discovering the time and locale of origin of the Niti literature of the Hindus, e.g., the *Sukraniti*. The results of his "preliminary spadework" in this regard are sociologically interesting.

III

In his attempt at determining the region inhabited by the authors of the *Sukraniti*, Sarkar examined the geographical facts and phenomena described or suggested in it. In connection with the construction of the capital city and the royal residence or palace, and the officers' quarters, the *Sukraniti* is very particular about the directions, northern, or southern, eastern or western, that are to be specifically earmarked for particular rooms or houses. In *Vastu Śastras*, or Hindu treatises on buildings, the directions must be mentioned with particular care, because each is supposed to be presided over by a deity (e.g., Kuvera, or the god of fortune, is the lord of the north; Yama or Death is the lord of the south, and so on). "Hence each direction has a special value affixed to it over and above the ordinary secular significance which arises from the fact that human life and comfort are affected by the sun, wind and other natural agencies" (PBHS, 1914 : 20). The *Sukraniti* refers to the north, south, east, west and middle in another sense as well. For

example, one of the functions of the Sachiva or Head of the war office is described to be that of studying the men who are sent eastward and westward on missions. Similarly, it refers to the ‘north and west’ (pratyaguttaravasinah—north-west, according to Oppert) as the land of the Yavanas who “recognise authority other than that of the Vedas”, to the southern countries where Brahmanas are not condemned, if they marry maternal uncles’ daughters, to ‘Madhyadesa’ where artisans are beef-eaters and deviation from the normal customs like maintenance of chastity by women is not regarded as a sin, and to the ‘north’ where menstruation is not considered a state of pollution in women, or drinking of wine by females is not viewed as objectionable. Sarkar failed to identify the regions referred to because of the complexity of evidences and counter evidences and distribution of particular customs over various regions (*ibid.* : 21-27), But the readers are advised to concentrate on and consider a region *with reference to which* the author(s) of the *Sukraniti* may simultaneously mention the north, west, central and south as the quarters or divisions which allow “certain customs and practices which ‘deserve penance and punishment’ in the normal region that sets the standard” (*ibid.* : 27). Obviously, no southerner would regard a southern practice, viz., the practice of a Brahman’s marrying his mother’s brother’s daughter, (*dakṣine matuli-kanyā, uttare mānsabhojanam*) as abnormal. The same consideration applies to the westerners, northerners, etc. The only region or quarter that has *not* been thus mentioned must therefore be the land of Sukra’s ‘normal’ social life, and this is the Eastern. Whatever be the value of this inference, *one thing is clear*. “The geographical knowledge displayed by *Sukrāchāryya* is not confined to a particular area. The poets of *Sukra cycle* are not home-bred men, *their intellectual horizon is the whole of India*. They can think at once of four quarters of the motherland, even though conventionally” (*ibid.* : 28).

That they took into account ‘new men, strange faces, other minds’ and did not think exclusively of the local area that was

the scene of their activities is clear in several passages in the treatise, which mentioned, though indefinitely, regions, religions and languages other than their own. Thus one of the qualifications of the clerks or scribes is that of "knowing of differences in countries and languages." There is a statement that the system of measurements varies with the countries. The practice of undertaking tours to distant places is suggested by the advice that in foreign lands the following are useful to men—a wife without a child, good conveyance, the bearer, the guard or guide, the knowledge that can be of use in relieving others' miseries and an active servant. The reference to comfort of living in the home and the discomfort of life and work abroad affecting the soldiery as well as the commoners and the rule about "travelling allowances" furnish further proofs of the author's (s') awareness of lands and peoples "beyond the little 'platoon'" (*ibid.* : 29).

IV

As to the physical features of the country described in the *Sukraniti*, the internal evidence does not suggest that it was mountainous or rocky region, occasional allusions to subjects like the strategic importance of hills for defence of the capital city notwithstanding. One may, however, infer from the many references to rivers the familiarity of the author(s) with the importance of rivers in the life of a people and its polity. Thus the treatise suggests that the capital should be built at a place that is bestirred by the movements of boats (I, 425-428). Then in advising the rulers to bow down to powerful enemies, i. e., to "move along the line of least resistance," it gives the examples of the "cloud (that) never moves against the current of the wind" and "the rivers (that) never leave the downward course" (IV, vii, 492). So also in advising the king to restrain passions and try cases or administer *Vyavaharas* according to *Dharma*, it mentions that the subjects follow a king who does it as "the rivers the ocean" (IV, v, 564-65). The humane rule that if a 'bound down' or *āsiddha* person violates the limitations imposed upon him when swimming a river,

etc., he is not guilty (and should not be punished) (IV, v, 210-18) is another evidence in point. The stipulation that "anybody who can save somebody's wealth from absolute destruction posed by the ravages of water or deluge (from rivers), thieves, kings and fire, has a right to one-tenth" (IV, v, 601-2) "points to the same adaptation of juristic ideas to the physical features of the country" (PBHS, 1914 : 34).

The changeful and constantly shifting character of river-beds is alluded to in the instruction that one should not trust the abodes of the horned, nailed and toothed animals, the wicked people, rivers and women (III, 283-84). And the caution that one should not cross the river by arms nor board a boat that is likely to capsize (III, 52-53) indicates in a similar way the familiarity of the authors with rivers. Further, they advised that bridges should be constructed over the rivers. There should also be boats and water conveyances for crossing the rivers (IV, iv, 125-129).

Rivers have been mentioned in the *Sukraniti* specially in connection with agriculture and land-revenue. Thus, "agriculture which is said to have rivers for motheis is a good occupation" (III, 552-554). Regarding the assessment of the quality of land the ruler is advised to make a distinction between types of land on the basis of the nature of the source of water-supply. The king should realise one-third, one-fourth, or one-half from places which are irrigated by tanks, canals and wells, by rains and by rivers, respectively (IV, ii, 227-229). The *Sukraniti* thus recognises "the importance of rivers in Politics, Commerce, Agriculture and Public Finance" and implies that the country (of its origin) is a plain intersected by rivers. Likewise, the importance of sea and maritime commerce is recognised in the dictum that the spot or site of the capital of a kingdom will be "bestirred by movements of boats up to the sea" (I, 425-428). It is also an element of the sovereign's political importance and dignity. "How can the man," asks the treatise, "who is unable to subdue one's (his) mind master the world extending to the sea?" (I, 197-198). Sanskrit literature is replete with references to the ambition of

the Hindu kings and statesmen of swaying the destiny of an empire from sea to sea. As to the role of the king in the affairs of his own kingdom, the treatise says that the king is the cause of prosperity of this world, is respected by the experienced and old people and gives pleasure to the eyes of the people "as moon to the sea" (I, 127-28). If the king is not a perfect guide, his subjects will get into trouble "as a boat without a helmsman sinks in the sea" (I, 129-30).

While the treatise mentions only one island by name, i. e., Ceylon, its two other references to island are of a general character. Thus, "the earth with its seven islands is ever bound" to the Sarvabhauma, or the paramount sovereign (I, 368-74). The treatise stipulates also that the persons who are wicked by nature should be expelled by the king from the commonwealth and bound and transported to islands (IV, i., 215-216). The use of islands as convict settlements is unmistakably suggested in the last reference.

Sarkar's detailed analysis, which has been summarised above, gives only some general ideas of the variety of physical aspects of the country dealt with in the *Sukraniti*. The same diversity and variety of natural facts and phenomena of the said land are indicated in its references to the varied atmospheric and climatological conditions, geological conditions and vegetation. Information on climate and atmosphere of the land of Sukracharyya(s) can be gathered from various duties prescribed to kings and people as well as from the description of customs and rites during the several periods of the year and from the metaphors or similes occasionally used in elucidating or illustrating the ideas" (Sarkar, 1914a . 38).

The author of the *Sukraniti* displays, as the different parts of the treatise indicate, a knowledge of the heavenly bodies, both planetary and fixed, and seems to be acquainted with the facts of their movement and their effects on time (*idem* : I, 141-143). It mentions Jyotiṣa as one of the six *Vedāngas*. Jyotiṣa "measures time by studying the movements of nakṣatras and grahas." The sun is important in determining time and considered a member of the solar system. Secondly, it is

deemed a deity that gives light and whose attributes the king possesses. Thirdly, it is one of the navagrahas, in which capacity it is to be propitiated by the people through the use of the manikya or ruby, "which has red colour and the bright lustre of the Indragopa insect."

The mundane phenomena of the sun as the dispeller of darkness and the source of heat are duly mentioned. The king should display his character of the "summer sun" towards his enemies. But towards his own people he should present the milder face of the "Spring Sun".

Time is divided according to three systems—Solar movement, Lunar movement (period from one full moon to another) and according to Sāvana (period from morning to morning. i.e. 24 hours) (II, 788-89). "These three systems do not yield equal results, the solar day being longer than the lunar; and so it is suggested that 'in making payments of wages one should always take the solar (II, 789-90) time, in augmenting interest, the lunar time'" (Sarkar, 1914a : 39). And, "the Sāvana system should be followed in [giving] daily wages" (II, 789-90).

The moon too is depicted in the three roles of the sun, which have been mentioned above and many rules of social and political behaviour are exemplified with the metaphor of the moon. Thus, if the influence of bad men is like that of the burning sun, that of good people is like that of the moon (I, 323-324). The king should bear the attitude of autumn moon to the learned people. The capital should have the beautiful shape of the half-moon circle or square. "The moon in Indian literature is not only a standard of beauty, but is also a common object-lesson of gradual growth" (Sarkar 1914a : 40). Then, in the chapter on general rules of morality for the people, Sukracharyya describes the effects of gifts in the following words : "In this world there is nothing more capable of subduing others than charity and simplicity. The moon that has waned through gifts, when waxing, is beautiful, though in the form of a curve" (ibid : 41, III, 432-433).

References to the sky and atmosphere are made in describing the political ambitions of a king or a hero. Like

Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsam* singing the glory of the rulers or heroes whose sway included the earth and the sea and whose chariots used to "traverse the highways of the sky" (असुम्द्रा-क्षितिसनाम अनाकरथवर्तमानाम) the *Sukraniti* also observes, "Of the monarch who has conquered his senses, and who follows the *Nitisāstra*, prosperity is in the ascendant and fame reaches the skies" (I, 301-2). Further, by appropriate means the terrestrial beings can soar into the sky and even the thunder can be pierced (IV, i, 50). "The efficacy of human intelligence is here illustrated by allusion probably to the air-chariots of ancient times, called *Vimanas* or *Pushpakarathas* which have had a strong hold on Hindu popular tradition." (Sarkar, 1914a : 41) The Air or Vayu has been mentioned as one of the eight gods whose attributes are shared by the king. As Vayu "is the spreader (and diffuser) of scents, so is the king the generator (and cause) of good and evil actions." The poets of the Sukra cycle have also mentioned the air as the friend of fire in order to draw the moral that Right should always follow Might and that morality does not flourish in the absence of strength (cf. IV, vii, 376-77).

The analogy by which the *Sukraniti* illustrates the advantage of punctuality and regularity "indicates the very important place rains occupy in the physical and economic conditions of the people among whom they lived" (Sarkar, 1914a : 42). It thus points out that rains in time give rise to plenty but otherwise are highly injurious. The same idea is repeated in its fourth chapter : Where the clouds do not pour rain in season, there the lands are not productive and the commonwealth deteriorates.

The preceding analysis read along with the description of six seasons in the *Sukraniti* suggests that the territory referred to there is (i) a land of the powerful sun and (2) a land of rains. And, (3) throughout the treatise there is no reference to extreme cold. "Time is", Sukracharyya points out, "divided into several periods, epochs or ages according, in the first place, to rains, cold and heat and to the movements, shape

and nature of the planets ; and, in the second place, to the activities of men, whether beneficial or hurtful, and great or small.” There are thus two modes of reckoning time : (1) Physical and (2) Social or human.

The variations in temperature and moisture and rainfall seem to be the chief cause of dividing a year into six seasons. Particular seasons like *hemanta* foreboding the advent of winter, i. e., from mid-October to mid-December, and Winter are considered propitious for certain specific kinds of activities like warfare which should not be initiated in other parts of the year like the rainy season. A series of prescriptions and proscriptions like this gives the *Sukraniti* “the character of a serious matter-of-fact treatise dealing with the most momentous problems of life” (Sarkar, 1914a : 45).

V

The *Sukraniti* contains references to the commonplace idea in the Hindu literature that the earth contains in its womb precious metals. It lays down that the man who is powerful, intelligent and valorous enjoys the earth full of its wealth (I, 349-50). “This is,” Sarkar commented, “Sukra’s version of the idea contained in the adage *Virabhogya Vasundhara* (...the earth which bears wealth can be enjoyed by heroes alone)” (1914a : 46). In their pursuit of wealth men of Sukra’s land ‘would not scruple to disembowel the ‘unsurpassed’ treasures of the underground universe...’” (*ibid* : 81). Indeed, mines have often been mentioned as one of the sources of Government Revenue (II, 211-12, 671-72, IV, ii, 213). The section on Treasure in the treatise gives details about precious stones, metals and other mineral products. The *Sukraniti* has referred to the metals and precious stones only as they affect the economic, financial and political life of the people. The knowledge of the Hindus regarding metals may be traced in almost all branches of their literature from the Vedic times to the middle of the sixteenth century A. D. The same may be said of their knowledge of the gems and their use. The Hindu literature on metals seems to have grown mainly round the

practical arts connected with industry, medicine and alchemy. It also appears that "commercial intercourse was sufficiently active in promoting the formation of all-India 'markets' or rather 'world-markets' for valuables. It is therefore difficult to give a 'local' character to the mining and allied topics referred to in *Sukraniti*" (Sarkar, 1914a : 77).

India's legendary opulence in minerals and metals has been mentioned by foreign travellers as well. It is no wonder then that India has a God of Riches (*Kuvera*), a god for those riches that grow in the mountains and not those that grow in the fields. The *Sukraniti* refers to *Kuvera* as the god of wealth who protects the jewels of the universe (I, 141-43, 151). It appreciates *Kuverata* or the possession of wealth more than many other qualities, though it is considered inferior to *Isatā* or over-lordship (IV, iii, 4-5).

The frequent references to *Alamkara* or ornaments indicates the popularity of the same among the people depicted in the treatise. It speaks of three uses of ornaments : (a) as valuables of the treasury and as marks of honour conferred on office bearers, (b) as decorations for the person of a female, and (c) for adorning images of the *rajasika* type. Those who use others' clothes, ornaments, gold, etc., are described as social offenders. The importance of ornaments in the material life of the Hindus becomes evident also from the enumeration and classification of ornaments in the *Nirukta* of Yāska, the grammar of Pāṇini, the old vocabulary of Amarasingha, from Manu's definition of the nature and duties of the caste whose special vocation was to manufacture them, from the sculptures of Bhuvaneswara and the bas-reliefs of Sanchi and Amaravati and other places. After mentioning all these Sarkar wrote, as if in sharp reaction to the insinuations by the foreign scholars against the capacity of the Hindus for material advancement. "The countrymen of Sukiacharyya are thus neither barbarous people who do not understand the importance of valuable commodities and who have not aesthetic sense to appreciate them as materials for decorative and utilitarian arts..... They are sane men dealing with the world as it is, and have

to reckon with the human passions as they are. They therefore do not taboo wealth and enjoyments from their scheme of life, but try to regulate them as far as necessary" (1914a : 80).

The *Sukraniti* refers not only to gold and silver which are used in ornaments but other metals and minerals as well. Mining is one of the recognised occupations and the rulers have a right to its yield, the realisation of which will be studied by his Sumantra or "Finance Minister" Not only the miners but the goldsmiths, copper-smiths and other metal workers including those who make lighter machines, gunpowder, arrows, cannon-balls, and swords, and tools and implements require the patronage and protection of the king. Falsehood practised in relation to the standards of weights and measurements, currency, some kinds of metals, etc., is declared as offences punishable by the king. If the making of "artificial gold" is recognised as an art or one of the sixtyfour *kalas*, the testing of the purity of minerals and metals is equally important an art in the list. The *kalas* include also the following : (a) melting, powdering, incineration, etc. of metals ; (b) the knowledge of the mixtures of metals and herbs or medicinal plants ; (c) analysis and synthesis of metals ; (d) preparation of alloys ; (e) alkalies and salts ; (f) cleansing, polishing ; (g) dyeing of stone and metal vessels ; (h) making of ornaments ; (i) enamelling ; (j) preparation of seals or emblems, tools and implements, etc.

Metals appear in the *Sukraniti* to have a religious bearing also. The "religious branch of metalcraft" compels the artist to meticulously conform to the canons of Hindu art. If defects of proportion may somehow be tolerated in temporary images, they are unpardonable in images of stones and metals. "If the sculptor bungle with the work entrusted to him and do not construct the image according to the prescribed measurements of the limbs, his wealth and life would be jeopardised and his misery will daily increase" (ibid. : 83 ; IV,iv, 157-59).

A touch of mysticism may be discerned in the "doctrine of seven metals" which seems to underlie Sukra's sevenfold

classification of metals. After a detailed examination of the description of metals and their qualities and uses in the Hindu literature since the Vedic age, Sarkar inferred that the doctrine indicates a particular stage in the evolution of the Hindu ideas of metals, viz., that between the 14th and the 17th centuries. He "hazard[ed] a hypothesis" to explain the "philosophy" of the doctrine. It may be sought in "the Theory of Mystic Numbers like three, seven, nine, etc., which has had its day in both eastern and western thought" (*ibid.* : 90). So far as 'seven' is concerned, in India we have, he pointed out, the seven Rishis, the seven mouths or tongues of Fire, the seven *Kula-parvatas* or mountains, the seven rivers, the seven planets or *grahas*, the seven heavens, the seven seas (salt, curd, milk, etc.), the constellation of seven stars called *saptarśimandala*, the seven immortals ('chirajivinah'), etc. "The tradition of seven being the number of principal metals may have had its origin in the same tendency of people to tabulate important facts and things of the world according to one or other of the numeral orders. Or, originally, the doctrine may have had nothing to do with mystic numbers—it may have been the result of a simple observation of mineralogical facts" (*idem*).

It is equally probable that metals were classified into seven in consonance with the idea of seven planets known to the Greek and the Hindu thought at a certain stage of human development.

A similar explanation of Sukra's nine-fold classification of the *ratnas* or gems or jewels was offered by Sarkar. While the metaphor of ratna or gem was used in the *Sukraniti* to highlight the extraordinary qualities of things and persons, it also discussed various uses of gems and jewels in real life. Gems were the most highly valued embellishments in ornaments. Its definition of *dravya* (Money) includes not only metallic coins but also gems and cowries. It mentions jewels and precious stones mainly as valuable articles of commerce. The king should pay his four muhurtas for consideration of the ratnas in the royal treasury. An officer of the king, with

expertise in detecting the false stones and selecting the genuine ones, would look after them. Trades in gems and jewels are forbidden without the license from the king who enjoys a royalty of net proceeds from gems from akaras or from trade in them. Like the goldsmiths, coppersmiths and other metal workers, the artists and artisans in gems and jewels also deserve encouragement from and protection of the king. The making of artificial gems and also their detection are *kalas*. The fraud involved in the passing off of imitation jewels for genuine ones is a *chhala* or offence punishable by the king.

Along with the elaborate description of the qualities of gems and the ways of discerning them, Sukra refers to many beliefs and practices of the Hindus in relation to gems or ratnas. And, Sarkar inferred from one such reference, viz., that one should give up vanity and carefully receive knowledge, *mantra*, medicine, wife and gems even from low families (III, 193-194), that "medicines, gems, etc., were in Sukra's days, as in ancient Hindu times generally, dealt in by the low class men" (op. cit. : 106). Then, there are prescriptions and proscriptions by Sukra regarding the use of gems for ensuring good fortune and insuring against ill luck. And, the suggestion regarding the association of nine gems spoken of by Sukra and nine planets (in the Hindu astrology which regards the sun also as a planet) appeared so strong in the *Sukraniti* as Sarkar presented a lengthy discussion of the doctrine of nine gems.

For the Hindus nine is, noted Sarkar, a mystic number like seven. The Indian thought is marked by the notions of nine planets, nine gems, nine nights (called *navaratra*, meaning thereby the sacrificial rite that is completed in nine days or nights), nine *rásas* (or feelings and emotions, e. g., amorous, ludicrous, pathetic, etc., according to the Hindu canons of literary art), the nine *lakshanas* (or marks of Brahma according to the *Vedānta Paribhāṣā*, the nine *Saktis* (or energies), the nine castes (of the Sudra order, according to the *Paiśācara Samhitā*), the nine doors (e. g., two eyes, mouth, etc., of the human organism), the nine islands of the Ganges (which, according to the Vaiṣṇava poet, Narahari Dāsa, formed the site of what in

later times has been Navadvipa or Nadia, the land of Chaitanya), also the nine tests of Kulinism propounded by king Ballala Sen of Bengal (12th cent.). Sarkar added, in a footnote to this list, the word, *Navanavaka*, which "occurs in *Daksha Samhita* (III ; 3) as a mnemonic for nine groups or classes of 'house-holder's duties', each consisting of nine functions. Thus we have nine *amritas* or sweet functions, nine gifts, nine duties, nine forbidden things, nine secret activities, nine successful functions, nine failures, nine public activities, and nine things not to be given away" (*ibid.* : 107).

Does the idea of nine gems or its metaphorical use in the popular notions like that of *navaratna* in the court of Vikramaditya merely reflect the Hindu reverence for the number, nine ? To take the specific instance of Vikramadityan navaratna, did the nine intellectual celebrities historically exist and were they contemporaries ? How could Kalidasa, whose supposed patrons, i. e., the Gupta monarchs. belonged to the 4th and 5th centuries, be placed alongside Varahamihira who is now known to have flourished in the 6th century ? The notion of *navaratna* thus seems inexplicable in terms of history.

"Under these circumstances," wrote Sarkar, "the easiest explanation would of course be to ascribe the origin of the tradition to the desire of the people for a convenient mnemonic grouping together the greatest makers of national literature, art, and science through the ages, long after the great masters had played their part on the world's stage. The traditions of seven wise men of Greece and the seven Magi of Persia afford instances of such convenient groupings of men who have lived, if they were really men of flesh and blood, ages apart from each other" (*ibid* : 108). Assortments like *Navaratna* are but attempts of the posterity at "reconstructing the history" of previous generations, lying hidden in the dim vistas of folklore, tradition, myths and fables, and often obliterate the sharp edges of temporal and local differences. Such "improvisations" are "not...without deep historical and sociological significance. For, these traditions are, at any rate, replete with the associations of the epochs in which they were made and

must bear the impress of the general features of the culture of the day" (*idem*).

Sarkar's extensive survey of the Hindu literature from the Vedic times down to the sixteenth century shows that the ideas of the Hindus regarding the gems, their number, their connection with planets as members of the celestial system, and as influencing things mundane, had never been fixed but kept on changing. The metaphorical use of the doctrine of nine gems in the Indian tradition should, then, be ascribed to an epoch that was used to the idea of nine gems. The *Sukraniti* thus yields two farthest limits of chronology : (1) the 10th century—furnished by the doctrine of nine gems, and (2) the 14th century—indicated by the doctrine of seven metals. The difficulty however persists. If the doctrine of nine planets be the basis of nine gems, nine metals were correspondingly expected. Alternatively, seven metals supposedly linked with the original seven planets should have been accompanied by seven gems. Sarkar's only explanation of the problem is that in India the metals seem to have had no connection with the planets even up to the 14th century (*ibid.* : 115). He did not, however, explain why the "mnemonical" number was seven or nine (in the above cases), which he refused to accept as a mystical number, and not any other number.

This discussion on the significance of particular numbers in the Hindu thought can hardly be concluded without the following observation by Sarkar : "*The number four seems to have been favourite with Hindu authors in thinking of classes.* For corresponding to the four castes in social life we have four classes of elephants [as recorded in the *Brihat Samhita* or *Sukraniti*] and also four classes of wood" (1914a : 285 ; emphasis and parenthesis added). Sarkar quoted from Mookerji (1912 : 20 ; 1957 : 13-14) to show that the *Briksha Ayurveda* or the Science of plant-life (Botany) distinguished among four kinds of wood : the first or *Brahmana* comprises wood that is light and soft and can be easily joined to any other kind of wood, the *Kshatriya*

kind of wood is light and hard but cannot be joined on to any other classes ; the wood that is soft and heavy is marked as of the third or *Vaisya* class ; while the fourth or the *Sudra* class of wood is characterised by both hardness and heaviness.

VI

Since the type of flora in one area varies from that of another area (one type, thus, suggesting the specificity of the locale where it grows) and because the knowledge of plant life varies in different epochs, Sarkar examined the references to the flora in the *Sukraniti* in order to form an idea of the place and time of its origin. Three long, multicolumn tables or schedules indicating the Sanskrit name of each one of the trees, plants and creepers mentioned in it, its English equivalent, corresponding Botanical term and its habitat, prepared by him with an amazing amount of patience and skill, shows that the Sukra flora consists of a little above 100 plants of which 7 cannot be identified. The total number of species depicted in the *Sukraniti* is 93 under 40 natural orders. And, the regions or zones of this flora are as varied as the whole of the Indian vegetation. Hence the characterization of the Sukra flora as belonging to a particular area "on the strength of the 'statistics' and physiognomics of plants" and the determination of the locale of the *Sukraniti* from a study of the geography of its flora become extremely difficult.

But with an indomitable energy Sarkar made a broad survey of the Indian Botanical geography for ecological evidence to ascertain if the Sukra flora could be allocated to any particular Botanical Province of India. He searched for literary evidence as well and made a preliminary attempt at a historical treatment of the knowledge of the flora displayed by the makers of the Indian literature. "A history of Indian botany like that of Indian mineralogy is" according to him, "likely to solve some important questions of Indian Chronology, as they are really parts of the larger history—that of Indian economic as well as political life and

institutions" (1914a : 153). His survey yielded the following conclusions regarding the Geography of the Sukra flora.

- (1) Botanical statistics proves it to be subtropical.
- (2) Ecology (including Meteorology and Phyto-geography) proves it to be 'Gangetic', according to the nomenclature of Hooker,
- (3) Literature or Comparative Botany proves it to be less Himalayan than Vedic and Charaka (and perhaps *Meghadutam*), less encyclopaedic than *Raghuvamsam*, more Himalayan than Varaha, more extensive than Varaha as including (i) Himalayan and (ii) Deltaic, more extensive than Vedic and *Meghadutam* as including Deltaic, and probably co-extensive with Charaka.

The Sukra flora thus represents the upper Gangetic plain, Himalayan regions as well as the humid deltaic and littoral sections of Eastern India. As for chronology, literary history proves the Sukra flora to be Islamic, and does not prevent it from being at least as old as Charaka.

The importance of plants and forests in the "Indian social economy" has been duly emphasised in the *Sukraniti* (ibid. : 161). The third and fourth stages or asramas of the Hindu life called *Vanaprastha* (for restraining passions and activities) and *Yati* or *Sanyasa* (to be practised only by the Brahmanas for attainment of salvation) involve the house-holders' retirement to the forests. Among the general rules of morality laid down in the *Sukraniti*, one reads that a life in the forests is preferable to dependence on the others. The law enjoins the king to summon those persons, who retire to the forests, after knowing of complaints against them to answer the charges. In cases of offences in the forests or other inaccessible regions where human evidence, e.g., witnesses, etc., is not available, the divine *Sadhanas* or ordeals should, Sukracharyya ordains, be resorted to. Then again among several instances of trial by peers one reads that 'foresters' are to be tried with the help of foresters.

While hunting in the forests is described as a sport for the kings, their importance in the defence of the kingdom is

recognised in the narration of *Vanadurga* or forest forts, in the reference to the king's utilisation of the service of "sādyaska" (new or raw) or 'agulmaka' (not officered and divided into regiments by the state but directed by their own leaders) peoples living in the forests, e.g., Kiratas, in his army. Forests as the sources of fuel, fodder, grass, timber as well as fruits are duly recognised in the treatise. A wide variety of uses of plants and an array of "kalas or industries connected with plants" are discussed in the *Sukraniti*.

The "Sukra statesmen" advise the kings to give away lands for the gods, for parks and public grounds, and for dwelling houses of the peasants and for no other purposes. One is prohibited under law to obstruct the tanks, wells, parks, etc. The parks are the resorts of the people as well as the king for recreation. The king would carefully indulge in enjoyments with the people in parks. The king should, according to Sikra, appoint an *aramadhipati* or superintendent of parks and forests, who would have a sound knowledge of "agri-flori-horticulture" (cf. *Sukra II*, 317-319). His counterpart in the *Arthashastra* would be *Kupadhyaksha* or that committee of the *Mahasabha* of the village, the unit of administration in the Chola empire, that was engaged in supervision of forests.

Though no clear reference to the knowledge of the *aramadhipati* regarding the role of forests in maintaining the ecological balance is found in Sukra's treatise, that the Hindus of the yore were not totally devoid of ecological knowledge, is demonstrated, Sarkar showed, in Varahamihira's ideas about the influence of plants on (i) other plants and (ii) climate, and in his theory of sylviculture.

Sarkar presented, in this connection, an extract from the article on "Forests and Forestry" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th Edn.) which described how "with the advent of British rule forest destruction became more rapid than ever" in India. And, he juxtaposed the same with the following observation of Dewan Bahadur R. Raghunath Rao in the *Madras Standard* (as reported in the *Siddhanta Dipika*

for December, 1906) : "I am afraid this is not generally known to the European public what the feelings and opinions of the Hindus are regarding forests and trees. Their religion tells them that trees have souls like men ; that cutting down a living tree is as bad as killing a living man ; that their twigs, even branches, leaves, when absolutely required, should be removed without any harm to the trees ; that only dried trees should be cut down for fuel ; that forests should not be destroyed because, in addition to other reasons, they are the residence of the third and fourth Asramas of the Dwijas , that trees also are the tabernacles of God, and that to plant a tree is a virtuous act, and so on.

"The Hindus do not and cannot therefore advocate the indiscriminate destruction of forests. There is a belief that one is allowed to live in a more pleasant world than this, so long as the trees planted by him here exist. Any indiscriminate destruction of trees is very abhorrent to a true Hindu" (cited in Sarkar, 1914a : 171).

Though a number of rules regarding practical gardening and principles of "phyto-pathology" may be found in the *Sukraniti* (and in the *Brihat Samhita*), it does not refer to the treatment of vegetable motifs in art. "Like the metals and animals of the country the indigenous plants also have left their permanent impress upon Hindu art" (ibid. : 179). Sarkar, a bard of the glory of India, quoted the views of the European art-critics to prove the originality and ingenuity of the Indian artists and craftsmen in this respect. "The Indian aptitude for artistic representation of plant-life certainly was not learned from the Greeks, who could not teach the lesson. Sir George Watt points out to me that the pinnate foliage motives are distinctively Indian" (Vincent Smith in *History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon* (1911), quoted in Sarkar, 1914a : 180).

The account of Sukra's ideas regarding forests, trees, plants, gardens and gardening will not be complete without a consideration of his treatment of the agricultural plants and agricultural activities and the rules regulating them (Sarkar, 1914a : 180-186).

Agriculture is one of the four subjects dealt with in the science of *Vārta*. Sukra thinks that (a) the occupation of agriculture is superior to that of the Vaisyas, i. e., commerce, and menial service of the Sudras and (b) it is too important to be left to a proxy. He notices that even Brahmanas can, according to Manu, take to agriculture. Agriculture should be patronised by the king. In agriculture, as in shop-keeping and other occupations, women are to be assistants of males.

The agriculturists are exempted in the harvest season from the liability to give evidence. The peasants should have their disputes decided "according to the usages of their guild." Those who deal collectively in gold, grains and liquids will have earnings according to the amount of their shares, greater, equal or less.

The *Sukraniti* does not provide much information regarding the agricultural tools and implements, though it mentions drawing of the plough as one of the sixtyfour *kalas*. In relation to the possession of livestock a system of stratification is clearly envisaged in the *Sukraniti*, according to which the Brahmins should have 16 cows to their ploughs, the Kshatriyas, 12, the Vaisyas, 8, the Sudras, 4, and the Antyajas, only 2. Without a remark on the rationality or irrationality of the principle Sarkar expatiated (*ibid.* : 181) on the equitable manner in which the *Sukraniti* apportioned land revenues in consonance with the variations in agricultural return because of the varying degrees of fertility of the soil and access to the market. He, however, gave the following explanation of the variation in the possession of animals at a subsequent page: "The difference in the number of cattle to be employed for the same work according to the caste of the worker, seems to have been justified in those days by the idea that, in the case of those whose normal occupations were non-agricultural, e. g., Brahmanas and Kshatriyas, agriculture should be looked upon, when they do take to it, as an *apaddharma*; and as they are not used to it, they should have as helpmates a larger number of cattle to relieve them of the physical strain than those whose ordinary

occupation being manual does not require the extraneous help" (*ibid.* : 258). Is this explanation entirely satisfactory ? Or, should Sarkar read in such provisions a disdain of the higher castes for manual labour and a kind of correspondence between caste position and economic possession or class position in the society of the "authors of *Sukra Cycle*" ?

As to the collection of rent, the king and his officers should deal with the peasant in such a way as he be not destroyed. The rent is to be realised in the fashion of the weaver of the garland (who in plucking flowers takes care that the stock be not exhausted) and not of the charcoal or fuel merchant (who destroys the wood altogether ; *Sukra*, IV, ii, 222-23 ; Sarkar, 1914a : 181). Having ascertained the amount of produce from the measured plots of land, whether great, middling or small, the king should desire the revenue and then apportion it among them (*Sukra*, IV, ii, 220-221). "*And, in order to protect the peasant,*" remarked Sarkar, "*from 'rack-rent,'* a further economic maxim is laid down for *sunantra* and *amatya's* consideration. It consists in the generalization (224-226) thatsuch cultivation is to be regarded as successful from which the net return is double the expenditure (including the government demand). *Sukra seems to direct the attention of the assessment officer and collector to the fact that, whatever be the amounts of produce and whatever the scheduled rates of government revenue, the peasant must be assured of an earning which is at least twice the expenditure* (Sarkar, 1921 : 118-19 ; emphases save those on Sanskrit terms added). Many other rules and principles laid down in the *Sukraniti* with regard to the determination of the King's share of agricultural produce and the realisation of the same bespeak the equitable outlook and practical wisdom of the Hindus of bygone ages (Sarkar, 1914a : 181-82).

What Sarkar appears to have underplayed is the queer mixture of magical and supposedly divine elements with this practical knowledge in the psyche and society of these Hindus. Thus, on the one hand, the *Sukraniti* mentions the importance of grains for the king and his kingdom. It enjoins upon the

king to appoint a Dhanyadhipa or chief of grains or granaries, having knowledge of species, measurements, values, essential characteristics of grains, and spend some time before his meals in studying the estimates of income and expenditure about grains, clothes, gols, etc. While it mentions the winnowing of grains as a *kals*, it depicts the various ways of collecting and preserving grains. The man who destroys grains is declared to have committed an offence that is *Rajajneya* or cognisable by the state as against itself, even without any plainliff. "This is one of the 22 cases enumerated by Sukracharyya as coming under *crown vs. defendants*" (Sarkar, 1914a : 184). A variety of uses of grains for domestic, industrial or artistic purposes is discussed in Sukra's work.

On the other hand, the *Sukraniti* describes rice as one of the ingredients used in determining the guilt of an offender by *Divya sadhana*, or divine test. The accused person has to chew without anxiety or fear one *Karsha* amount of rice (Sukra, IV, v, 483). "The rice ordeal declares," Sarkar explained, "a man guilty who in chewing the rice experiences difficulties, through palpitation of heart or want of salivation, etc., owing to excess of excitement or agitation" (f. n. 1 to line 483 in Sukra, IV, v ; and Sarkar, 1914a : 184). He offered no other justification for the rice ordeal and was completely silent over the rationale behind the other kinds of ordeal like the ordeal of fire or that of swallowing poison or catching a poisonous snake by hand. Similarly, Sarkar appeared proud to record that "the minute observation of limbs and other features of animals...was a characteristic of Hindu intellect" (Sarkar, 1914a : 282). He at the same time referred to the Hindu ideas regarding the good or bad omens as indicators of the character, quality and future social or economic conditions of the men bearing these marks on their limbs and bodies and dwelt at some length on the "authoritative" treatment in the *Sukraniti* of the auspicious or inauspicious marks that may appear on the body of a horse or elephant and their implications for the quality and future of the animal and the fortune of its possessor. He maintained,

however, a studied silence on the basis of the beliefs in such omens.

Sarkar was equally indifferent to the justification of discriminatory applications of the ordeals in cases of the members of different classes (castes ?). Thus, rice ordeal is to be applied in a case involving a theft of Rs. 125 (the figure was calculated by Sarkar at 1914 price index). But Sarkar's translation of the *Sukraniti* records, "The above figures are meant for the worst (class of people), and it is declared in the smritis that twice those (respective figures) should be taken (in the case) of the better class (of persons), and also four times that (in the case) of the highest (class of men)" (*Sukra IV, V, 491-92*). Sarkar observed in the footnote to the above lines that fire-test is to be applied for a theft of Rs. 1000 by the निकृष्ट, of Rs. 2000 by the मध्य, and of Rs. 4,000 by the उत्तम, and so on. He made, however, not a single comment on the congruity or dissonance of such provisions as the above with the picture of an equitable system of justice of the Hindus, which he wanted to present.

Probably, Sarkar could not reflect deeply enough on these questions since he had been preoccupied with the search of evidence of the knowledge of Botany and Zoology among the Hindus. He found that though the *Sukrāniti* gave information regarding the knowledge of the Hindus in several branches of "Economic, Utilitarian or Applied Botany", viz., Sylviculture, Horticulture and also "the botanical kalas" related to the *Ayurveda* it did not otherwise devote much attention to the "Medical Branch of Economic Botany". Likewise, the treatise provides very few materials pertaining to Theoretical Botany or Botany as an abstract science. It does not proceed beyond suggesting the equal importance of the quality of seeds and the character of field for excellence of the outcome or the two-fold classification of trees into thorry and fruit-bearing or into wild and domestic or the description of the seven parts of a plant in the scientific order.

"This is very inevitable, since the subject of plants and

plant-life touches the province of Nitisastras solely from the utilitarian stand-point" (*ibid.* : 193). Moreover, Sarkar reminded his audience, "purely botanical studies, i.e., abstract researches regarding plants as *plants* rather than as things useful or deleterious to man and beast are purely modern" (*ibid.* : 191). It is possible, he believed, to glean from the massive literature "on industrial and applied botany and horticultural recipes the really scientific conceptions of Hindus" regarding (i) Vegetative organography (ii) Anthology, (iii) Fruit and seed, (iv) Anatomy, (v) Phyto-graphy, (vi) Taxonomy, (vii) Nomenclature, (viii) Ecology and (ix) Dendrology. He presented summaries of researches by scientists on the above themes (*ibid.* : 197-206). The nationalist in Sarkar was, however, pained to observe that the sole aim of botanical researches in India during the period from the eighties of the last century had been (1) to study scientifically or economically the trees, plants and creepers of the Indian continent following the accepted doctrines of contemporary European botanists ; (2) "to look upon India solely as a vast herbarium supplying specimens for the scholars in the western world ; (3) to ransack or exploit Indian vegetation in the interest of a foreign industry, commerce and science." (*ibid.* : 196). He called upon the Indian scholars and researchers (a) to take stock of the existing Hindu literature on the subject of plants, whether as *plants*, or as drugs or other useful ingredients and (b) "to maintain and continue the studies of ancient and mediaeval scholars of India (whether scientific or utilitarian), and develop the heritage bequeathed by them to posterity" (*idem*).

VII

From the foregoing analysis Sarkar inferred : 'a: the wide and deep cultivation of the mineralogical, medical, chemical and botanical sciences among the Hindus ; (b) the existence of special schools of Hindu thinkers engaged

as masters or commentators, in specialised branches of scientific literature; (c) the dynamical nature of these "schools of Hindu physical sciences". The Indian sciences "should not", according to him, "be regarded as the finished creations of certain golden eras in Indian history or the characteristic products of one or other of the various races that have peopled India, but are the results (i) of a continuous evolution incorporating the cumulative experience of ages, and (ii) of the conscious or unconscious collaboration of master-minds, systematisers, compilers and commentators belonging to the north, south, east, west and middle of India" (Sarkar, 1914a : 209).

Prior to the demonstration of the veracity of the above inferences in the realm of knowledge of the Hindus in Zoology and Anatomy, Sarkar presented a fascinating account of the zoological lore of the Hindus as reflected in the descriptions of (a) the Vedic Fauna, (b) the Maurya Fauna, (c) the Fauna in Hindu Folk-lore (d) the Sacred Fauna (f) the Fauna in Hindu Art, (g) the Varahamihiran Fauna, (h) the Ayurvedic Fauna, (i) the Fauna in Veterinary Literature and finally, (j) the Sukra Fauna (ibid. : 215-45). The people of Hindusthan had attempted to gain familiarity with different animals, birds, reptiles, etc., since the Vedic times. Their close acquaintance with "the topics generally treated in Descriptive Zoology or Natural History" is also borne out by the existence of innumerable legends, both secular and religious, with animals playing a prominent part as *dramatis personae*, and as narrators, or forming the subject matter, that entered into the curriculum of studies in ancient and mediaeval India. Sarkar surmised the indebtedness of Europe to India on this count. "The consecration of animals to gods and goddesses as well as the deification of Fauna" are, noted Sarkar, two important characteristics of the Hindu religious system. These have left their marks on the literature, sculpture and architecture of ancient and mediaeval India, "and point to the copiousness as well as popularity of Zoological lore among the Hindus" (ibid. : 221).

In the Hindu mythology the Fauna have been so important as three incarnations of the Divinity in times of sore distress for mankind and creation have taken the forms of animals. As architecture, sculpture and painting have in all ages and climes been hand-maids to religion and mythology, it is but natural that Indian art also bears the impress of the animal lore of the Hindus. Art and literature may and do, urged Sarkar, have their careers independent of religion in both the East and the West, expressing the thousand and one feelings, sentiments, ideals, aspirations, etc., of a non-religious or secular order. He had to point it out in order to rebut Vincent Smith's comment that "Indian art is the slave of religious tradition." The innumerable specimens of sculpture and painting described and illustrated by Smith himself as well as other art-critics bring out "the secular aspects in no uncertain light and give the direct lie to the statement" (Sarkar, 1914a : 224, f.n. 1). Indian fauna and animal lore have left deep impress on both the religious and secular branches of Indian art ; "and this is another testimony to the Hindus having cultivated their powers of observation with reference to natural history" (*ibid.* : 224).

Mammals, aves, pisces and reptiles of the Vertebrate Kingdom have all contributed to the mythology of the Hindus. In tune with "*the tendency of the Hindu mind to give concrete shape to all transcendental or spiritual ideas and embody every sentiment in images*" all these phyla of the animal world are represented in the religious sculpture or plastic art as well as painting of Hindusthan" (*idem* ; emphasis added). The story is the same with Indian architecture as well. The portrayal of life had been continued in and through other forms of Hindu art, e.g., industrial arts, handicraft, etc., that minister to the purposes of commerce or domestic life. Animal figures are used as decorative or ornamental devices on textiles and silken fabrics, carpets, ivory carving, metallic bas-reliefs, earthen, wooden and stone vessels, etc.

In many Vedic hymns as well as in other pieces of religious

lore of the Hindus one may find examples "of that characteristic Hindu extollation, without any measure or limit, of the immediate object of reverence, which when applied to a divinity, has led to the setting up of the baseless doctrine of henotheism" (*ibid.* : 216). Sarkar refused to read ignorance and superstition of the primitive savage in this abundance of animal motifs in Hindu art and religious lore. It expressed on the contrary the characteristic Hindu feeling of reverence for and love of nature, both animate and inanimate. In perfect agreement with Havel (in his *Ideals of Indian art*), Sarkar remarked, "The Hindu conception of the reciprocity of Man and Nature, the doctrine of the participation of the whole Creation in the joys and sorrows of man, the philosophy of incompleteness of the one without the other, and the idea that Nature is not a mere background to display man in relief, that even dumb animals have a place in the heaven, are the eternal tenet, inspiring every work of the Hindu—in his mythological creation of the abodes of gods, in his literary master-pieces, and in his finest art-products" (*ibid.* : 228). Sarkar quoted from the *Indian Drawings* (Series, I, p. 18) the opinion that whereas in Persian paintings wild animals are regarded as creatures to be hunted rather than understood, in Indian work their own specific and individual character is delineated as affectionately as in the case of the portraits of human beings. The folk-art too is equally rich with animal motifs.

The animal world has been portrayed by the Sukra authors mainly as a source of analogies, illustration, etc., for the truths of the moral world. This kind of treatment is more or less conventional with the Hindu authors, and, while it indicates the authors' general knowledge of the habits and habitats of animals, it does not inform the readers of any certain geographical limits which may give some clues to the country of the authors. The problem of determining the locale through such references becomes all the more complicated in view of the fact that animals may be brought from one place to another for the purpose of sale. The paucity of

Zoological information in the *Sukraniti* becomes evident from a comparison of it even with the *Arthashastra* which itself is not rich in detail about the fauna. The latter distinguished the animals that were exempted from capture, molestation and slaughter, and maintained in the *Abhaya-vanas* or Forests of safety or sanctuaries from the rest. No classification whatsoever of animals can be found in the *Sukraniti*. Even in the chapter on animal-corps of the kingdom in the *Sukraniti* one misses not only the comprehensive character of *Palakappa* and *Aswavaidyaka*, i. e., treatises devoted exclusively to elephants and horses but also an exhaustive account of the military livestock as may be had in the *Arthashastra*.

One may, of course, get some important information regarding the social customs and economic and military activities of the land inhabited or dealt with by the author(s) of the *Sukra* cycle. Thus, the king should appoint separately the heads of elephants, horses, chariots, infantry, cattle, camels, deer, birds, gold, jewels, silver, clothes (*Sukra* II, 237-238). He should appoint domesticators of *sitira* birds, and good teachers of parrots, persons who know when *syena* birds fall victims to arrows as well as the inward feelings of the animals (*Sukra*, II, 300-302). Milking and churning are two important *Kalas*. *Sukra* lays down that "Falsehood must not be practised by any one with regard to ghee, honey, milk, fat, etc." (*Sukra*, I 590-2). Softening of leathers (IV, iii, 190), flaying of skins from the bodies of beasts (iv, iii, 181), extraction of oil from flesh (fat) iv, iii, 187) are three more occupations connected with animal life and fall into the gamut of 64 *kalas*. Further, one reads bird-catchers and leather merchants among the categories of persons who deserve the kings' patronage. That shoes were in demand is indicated by the following dictum of *Sukra*: One should always bear medicinal substances in jewels, etc., consecrated by mantras, have umbrellas and shoes, and walk in the streets with eyes fixed on the straight path only (III, 8-9). Flesh or meat, like fish, was known to be a diet of the people of *Madhyadesha*. It may be noted that in the *Sukraniti* there is no mention of

fishermen as a class, fishing as a kala, or realisation of revenue from fishing.

The cow has been specifically mentioned in the *Sukraniti* as the agricultural live stock. "In *Varta* are treated interest, agriculture, commerce and preservation of cows" (*Sukra, iv, v, 35-36*). Sukracharyya has described the tending of cattle and cultivation of land as two of the occupations of the Vaisyas and the driving of plough as an occupation of the Sudras. It is difficult, Sarkar correctly pointed out, to follow the meaning of the difference between cultivation of lands and drawing of ploughs unless the former implies supervision or "high class intellectual work connected with agriculture", and the latter, purely mechanical, manual work. What is more noteworthy in the *Sukraniti* is its special emphasis on the care and protection of the cows. Sarkar wrote that "the *Sukra* authors represent one of those stages in the history of Hindu national sentiment which gave concrete shape to the idea of cow as a divinity". Thus as one of the most justifiable "grounds for war," according to the *Sukraniti*, one gets "what may be compared with the cry of Shivaji, the great Hindu monarch of the 17th century : 'There are no rules about the proper or opportune time and season for warfare in cases created by killing of cows (*Sukra, iv, vii, 453*), women and Brahmans'. The physical consideration of time, place, etc., must not weigh when the most vulnerable point of national honour and feeling has been touched by the adversary" (*Sarkar, 1914a : 259*).

The age of the *Sukraniti* may thus be linked with "the 'Doctrine of the Divinity and Inviolability of the cow' as a cornerstone of Hindu religious system" and would not be older than "the advent of the Musalmans, with their alien creed as a formidable rival to contest the sovereignty of the land with the people of Hindusthan" (*idem*). One can hardly be blamed if one reads in the above lines something more than an historical analysis of the origin of the cult of the sacred cow or the time of origin of the *Sukraniti*. The emotional fervour with which Sarkar seems to have *defended* the Hindu

attitude towards the cow seems to present him as a protagonist of Hindu revivalism. The image becomes more confirmed in and through his analysis of the causes of decline of scientific pursuits of the Hindus. Sarkar, however, felt assured to have noticed the western scholars "coming to appreciate the cow-cult in their own way". Having described the multiple utilities served by the cow, the author of the article on Dairy in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (11th Edn.) remarked, "If the civilised people were ever to lapse into worship of animals, the cow would certainly be their chief goddess" (cited by Sarkar 1914a : 259 ; emphasis added). In his elation with the apparent support from a foreign author for his view regarding the manifold usefulness of cow and the consequently overflowing adoration for the same by the Hindus, Sarkar failed to notice the slight hurled by the western scholar on the Hindus and their animal worship. Further, Sarkar noted earlier (p. 23) in PBHS the wide prevalence of beef-eating in ancient India. Was its discontinuity in later times simply the result, as he believed, of the impact of Buddhism on the inhabitants of the country of Sukracharyya ? Or, was it because, as a cultural materialist like Harris (1980) and an economist like Bose (1961) argued, the animal whose flesh had previously been consumed became too costly to be used as food as a consequence of fundamental changes in the ecosystem and the mode of production ?

Sarkar intended to complete the story of "economic Zoology" in the *Sukrani*i** (or of the Hindus in general) with an elaborate discussion of animal-corps in the *Sukraniti*, particularly of the way how horses and elephants, bulls and camels were treated. The treatise gave a lot of detail about the external anatomy, mettle and worth and breed (and the role of omens in influencing or determining these), training and management of better horses and elephants. The injunctions of Sukra on some of these aspects agree, as Sarkar showed, with the views of modern authorities on horses and elephants. But what Sarkar was most impressed with was the knowledge of Sukra authors regarding animal and human

anatomy. And, it was a part of a long-continued parampara or tradition of the Hindus.

The Ayurvedic literature of the Hindus provides abundant proofs of the intimate acquaintance of the Hindus with various features of human organism, internal and external, as well as the principles governing animal life. Since agricultural live stock, draught cattle, cavalry, camel-corps, elephant-corps "were the common features of the domestic, economic and political life" of the Hindus, the Ayurveda made room for *Gajayurveda* and *Aswayurveda*, compositely known as *Salihotra* or veterinary science. The existence of treatises in Hindu literature, "specially addressed to the needs of the animal creation" "is the strongest evidence of Zoological studies in ancient and mediaeval India" (Sarkar, 1914a : 245).

The contributions of the Hindus to anatomy and osteology are found recorded not only in the medical literature belonging to the systems of Atreya-Charaka and of Susruta but in many non-medical works, e. g., the tantras which offer a lot of information on the nervous system in human body. Sarkar quoted in extenso from the writings of western authorities to highlight the extent and accuracy of anatomical and astrological knowledge which is disclosed in the works of the earliest medical writers of India. Regarding the scientific validity of the knowledge of human anatomy, particularly the nervous system of man, as might be culled from the Tantras, Sarkar crossed swords with a "Hindu renegade" who wrote in the *Calcutta Review*, Vol. XI, (pp. 436 – 440) that "It would indeed excite the surprise of our readers to hear that the Hindus, who would not even touch a dead body, much less dissect it, should possess any anatomical knowledge at all.....Such is the obstinacy with which the Hindus adhere to these erroneous notions that even when we show them by actual dissection the non-existence of the imaginary Chakras in the Human body, they will have recourse to excuses revolting to common sense, than acknowledge the evidence of their own eyes. They say

.....that these Padmas exist as long as a man lives, but disappears the moment he dies."

Sarkar retorted, "A Daniel has come to Judgment. Did the Hindu renegade take the trouble to compare Chakras with the plexuses of modern Anatomy ? Had he done so, he would not have talked such nonsense" (1914a : 191, f.n. 2). He agreed, of course, with Major B D. Basu, that the language of the tantras is "too allegorical and too mystical" to allow an easy and immediate identification of the Nadis, the Chakras and Padmas described in them. Major Basu thought that the three famous Nadis of the Tantras, viz., Suṣumnā, Idā, and Pingalā form the spinal cord, right and left sympathetic cords respectively. Though he pleaded his inability to satisfactorily identify the *Padmas* and *chakras*, he "nevertheless believe[d] that the Tantrists obtained their knowledge about them by dissection. These terms have been indefinitely used to designate two different nervous structures, viz. :- nervous plexuses and ganglia" (cited in Sarkar, 1914a : 292).

Sarkar cited the authority of Hoernle to argue that the surprisingly accurate knowledge of the Indian anatomists in the domain of osteology is attributable to the fact that they were accustomed to the practice of preparing the dead human body for actual examination, and, that their views were the direct knowledge of human dissection. If the compendium of Charaka contains no reference to dissection, that of Susruta contains a passage (at the end of the fifth chapter of *Sarirasthana*) with detailed instructions regarding the procedure to be adopted in preparing the dead body for anatomical examinations.

Sarkar pointed out the incorporation of anatomical chapters in some of the traditional text books on Smṛiti Sastras, Dharma Sutras, Puranas, Jyotiṣa, etc., and the commentaries on them by successive schools of scholars who were not necessarily experts in anatomy and/or medicine. It indicates, according to him, extensive diffusion of anatomical knowledge in ancient and mediaeval India and a liberal system of education among the Hindus, wherein every learner

had to gather some knowledge of anatomy as of other subjects. This universality of anatomical instruction is discernible in the Theory and Philosophy of Hindu Art including Architecture, Sculpture and Painting. The "masters" demanded of the sculptors and painters a scrupulous and meticulous adherence to the anatomical measurements stipulated by them regarding the construction of images of gods and their vahanas or conveyances and symbols.

These canons of Hindu art suggest (a) thorough knowledge of anatomy on the part of the promulgators and (b) their desire to perpetuate and propagate, through more or less enduring embodiments, "the national ideals of beauty in art as consisting in the closest conformity of artists with the specimens of symmetry and order exhibited by Nature in her great museum of the living universe. Once presented in art, the canons 'became conventional and have been traditionally followed by sculptors, painters, artists and craftsmen, even by those among them who had not received theoretical or demonstrational lessons in anatomy.....And, besides satisfying the spiritual sense of generations of devoted spectators, both educated and illiterate, these images and works of plastic and other arts have served for them the double purpose of anatomical models as well as object-lessons in aesthetic perfection ; —being at once the national schools of religious, secular and artistic education and culture" (PBHS. 1914 : 301). The passage indicates a shift from Sarkar's eulogy for the lack of symmetry in the works of art by the Hindus as symbols of the more fundamental spiritual harmony of the Hindus (cf. sup. 346). Secondly, one may read in it a brilliant defence of the stereotypes in Hindu art, which Sarkar himself came to criticise as expressions of the absence of originality. But it gives at the same time the picture which Sarkar had of the culture and society in ancient and mediaeval India—it was a well-rounded system.

VIII

The Hindus developed a viable political organisation to

protect their material achievements and cultural accomplishments and ensure further advancement. And, they had a corresponding political philosophy as well. Every system of political philosophy is, according to Sarkar, "at once the cause and effect of two sets of conditions....[First], it has its psychological affiliations in the general philosophical attitudes that make the spirit of the age. And, [secondly], it has its positive foundations in the groundwork of the people's material, social and political institutions" (1921 : 34).

V. P. Varma strongly disagrees with writers like Hegel, Masson-Oursel, Grabowska, Stern, Cox, et ali., who deny the historical existence of state in ancient India but he himself rules out the existence of any theoretical concept of state in India of ancient ages (1959 : 12-15). Sarkar read a definite conception and theory of state in the Hindu notion of kingdom or state as a saptamga or seven-limbed entity. The seven categories, svamin (sovereign), amatya (minister), suhrit (ally), koṣa (treasury or finance), rāṣṭra (territory), durga (fort), and vala (army) constitute the "seven limbs" of the body politic, as conceived of by the Hindus. All the nitisastras from Kautilya's *Arthashastra* to Bhoja's *Yukti-kalpa-taru* enquire into the nature of each of these seven elements and their mutual relations. "Necessarily subsumed under this investigation is the discussion of *samaya* (compact) as the origin of the state, *dharma* (droit, Recht, justice, law, duty, etc.) as the end of the government, *bali* (offerings) as the rationale for taxation by the state for its service to the community, *aparodha* (expulsion of the tyrant), *mandala* and other concepts of *Staatswissen* in Sanskrit literature" (1922a : 167).

Sarkar's analysis of "the human homologues of the different parts of the statal morphology" in the *Sukraniti* (1921 : 3)) or of the "Kautilyan doctrine of the interdependence of at least six of the seven angas, although partial" (ibid. : 39) shows that the Hindus certainly had an organic conception of the state or body politic. His

interpretation is more or less corroborated by Sharma (1959 : 14-32, 234), Saletoe (1963 : 83-84), Spellman (1964 : 8-9) in addition to Rāṅgaswami Aiyangar, D. R. Bhandarkar, Jayswal, and Kane, though it is difficult to suggest whether the latter would have accepted his discovery of Hindu awareness of the "functional" relationship of these parts (cf. Sarkar : 1921).

The Saptamga state was, Sarkar untiringly reiterated, *not* a theocracy. In Hindu political thought kingship was a secular institution, subject to the "constitutional limitations" exercised by the ministry and the people (1918 : 497-498). A corollary to it was the right of the governed to resist and even overthrow a tyrannical government (*ibid.* : 498-499). Refuting Ghoshal, Sarkar remarked, "He makes too much of the doctrine of the alleged divinity of the king in the Vedic texts....It is ignored that almost everything is endowed with the so-called 'divine' attributes in the Vedas" (1921 : 225, f.n.). Much later Basham too observed, "Divinity was cheap in ancient India" (1957: 86). Basham was cited by Spellman criticising Vaidya's opinion that the king's divine character impressed the minds of the people in ancient India so completely that they became almost slavish in their allegiance to him (cf. Spellman, *op. cit.* : 40)

The divine character of royalty is, admitted Sarkar, described in the *Manu Samhita*, the *Mahabharata*, the *Sukraniti*, etc. But the secular idea of kingship is not inconsistent with the conception of the king as a god in human form (cf. Spellman *op. cit.* : 27). "Royalty is indeed super-human energy embodied in a human institution, exactly as every activity and élan or sakti of life is godly or divine in the mythological imagery of Hindu heinotheism" (Sarkar. 1922a : 179). Manu and other Hindu thinkers did not contemplate the patristic dogma of the monarch as divine in a theological sense. "Their *metaphor* is meant only to bring to the forefront the supreme character of Bodin's *majestas* as an abstract attribute in civil authority...it is essential to remember the materialistic view of sovereignty"

in Hindu political theory (*ibid* : 180). The metaphorical sacredness of sovereignty does not in the opinion of the Niti philosophers carry with it the infallibility and inviolability of the holder of sceptre.

As if anticipating Varma's thesis that Sukra had a very definite idea of the divinity of king since "we cannot do away with his very definite and exact statement that the king is made out of the particles of eight gods", Saikar asserted that "Not any prince and every prince is 'made out of the permanent elements' of the gods..." (1922a : 180). Only a virtuous and dutiful king is "a part of the gods". But, if he happens to be an enemy of *dharma* and oppressor of the people, the king is "a part of demons" (*idem*) The nitisastras suggest the drastic remedy of "revolution and tyrannicide" against the latter (*ibid.* : 181). For example, Kautilya observes that *prakriti-kopo hi sarva kopebhya guriyan*, the wrath of the people is the most severe of all the wraths. According to Manu, the king who through foolishness tyrannizes over his own people is very soon deprived of his life together with his kith and kin (Manu VII, 111, 112). Such a persecutor is depicted in the Mahabharata as a "ruiner" or "destroyer" and is to be executed (*tam hanyuh prajah*, Anusasana, Ch, L x I, 32-34). Sukra too enjoins the expulsion of a king by the people, if the former is an enemy of virtue, morality and strength (ch. II, 549-552). The stories of overthrow and execution of Vena and Nahusha, the tyrants of Hindu legends, or of *apuruddha* or expelled kings in the *Brahmanas* and *Samhitas* provide further illustrations to the limits of the royal power,

Associated with the probability of deposition of a tyrannical king was the idea of election of a new, righteous ruler by the ministry (or the priests) acting on behalf of the people. Saikar referred to the epigraphic evidence in the Khalimpur Grant of Dharmapala which suggests *inter alia* that it was "in order to escape from the logic of fish", the people of Bengal elected his father Gopala to be their ruler.

Authors like Spellman find it difficult to view kingship in ancient India as a totally human and/or secular institution in the presence of many passages to the contrary in various texts. The divinity of kingship was, of course divinity in the widest and loosest sense and yet not without meaning. Divinity in a ruler elevates him above most men and instills the latter's confidence in the former. But, Spellman remarks (as if echoing Sarkar), "to claim divinity one must make good that claim by actions. Only as people are willing to accept that claim can it have practical consequences. In ancient India, this more depended on the king than upon the kingship" (op. cit. : 42).

That the Hindu theorists recognised the right of the people to revolt against an oppressive king was, however, totally rejected by Spellman. "The issue was one of responsibility.....The people could never revolt, theoretically, because their rights were usurped, but only because the king failed in his obligations to them. The concept of rights has played a part in the history of Western revolutions that would not have been possible in ancient India, where it was little emphasized" (ibid. : 7).

The dichotomy between 'state' and 'non-state' was, according to Sarkar, an important feature of the Hindu political thought. The Hindu political thinkers tried, in the first place, "to investigate in what particulars the state analytically differs from the non-state ; and, in the second place, [to understand] how the state grew out of the non-state" (1937 : 245). Citing the observations made in the *Mahabharata* (Santiparva, LXVIII(, 6-17, LXVII, 11-12), the *Manu Samhita* (VII, 20), the *Ramayana* (Ayodhyakanda, LXVII, 31), the *Matsya Purana*, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* (I, 4), Kamandaka's *Nitisara* (Digest of Politics, II, 40), Sarkar showed that the non-state (the Indian counterpart of the European notion of State of Nature) was, in the imagination of the Hindu theorists, characterised by the 'logic (*nyaya*) of the fish (*matsya*)'. "It is...with the negation of morals and manners, the nullification of property, the very antithesis of law

and justice that the non-state is identified" (Sarkar, 1937 : 250). And, a state is a state, argued the Hindu philosophers, because it can "coerce, restrain, compel. Eliminate control or the coercive element from social (samnha) or organised life and the state as an entity vanishes" (ibid. : 251). Life would slide back into *matsya nyaya* with the negation of Dharma and property. "The theory thus consists of two formulae :

- I. No *danda*, no state ;
- II.(a) No state, no *dharma*, and
(b) No state, no property" (*idem*).

The rationale, behind *danda* may be traced back to the original nature of men, about which the Hindu philosophers hardly had any disagreement (ibid. : 253). To Kamandaka, men are by nature subject to passions and covetous of one another's wealth and wives. Rare, observes Manu, is the man, pure or sinless (Durlabho hi sucirarah). The *Mahabharata* too finds human nature vulnerable to many a vice. Varma criticises Sarkar for his minimising the significance of the particular account in the *Mahabharata* of the (kingless) state of nature where human nature is described to have been marked by pristine purity and ruled by *Dharma*. Quite contrarily, Sarkar highlighted the logical connection between the two pictures of state of nature in the *Mahabharata*. "Not that there was no Saturnian golden age of pristine purity and bliss. For, says the *Mahabharata* (Santi, LIX, 14) anticipating over a millennium the dogmas of Father Lactantius and others, 'at first there was neither state nor ruler, neither punishment nor anybody to exercise it. The people used to protect one another through innate righteousness (*dharma*) and sense of justice'. But, as among Stoics and Canonists, the 'fall' of mankind is accounted for by the Hindus also on the basis of a postulate of sin, loss of true religion, *moha*, stupidity and what not" (ibid. : 253-254). The picture of the fallen state is available in the same Santiparva (LIX, 15-21) (ibid. : 50).

The tendencies of men to overthrow one another, and seize

every one else's property and wives, if there were sufficient strength to do that, as well as the proclivity towards sexual promiscuity (*yonidoṣa*—*Santi*, LXVIII, 22) are the features of "man as Nature made him" (*Santi*, LXVIII, 8-22, as cited in Sarkar, 1937 : 254-255). The way out of it all lies in the state based on Danda. Danda is, according to Manu, the king, the male (compared with which all other things are female), the manager of affairs, the ruler, the surety for the four orders pursuing their own duties in life. It is identical with law. "Danda....is obviously the very principle of omnipotence, comparable to *majestas* of Bodin...It is...aisvarya, svamitwa or sovereignty in a state..." (ibid. : 256).

The positive features of the state founded on danda consist in the promotion and protection of "first, *mamatva* ('mine'-ness, *Eigentum, proprium*) or *svatva* (*suum*), i. e., property, and secondly, *dharma* (law, *Sittlichkeit*, justice and duty)" (ibid. : 260). According to the Santiparva (LXVIII, 8-19), property does not exist in the non-state (*matsya-nyaya*), though people there may enjoy or possess things. Property, however, is not mere *bhoga*, i. e., enjoying or possessing : its essence consists in *mamatva* or *svatva*, i. e., ownership. "To be able to say mamedam (This is mine) about something constitutes the very soul of owning or appropriation" (Sarkar, 1937 : 261).

The state through danda creates and nurtures the proprietary consciousness through the injunction that articles shall be enjoyed by those to whom they belong and one's wife, children and food must not be encroached upon by others. And, it is only through *bhaya* or the fear of danda that the people honour these injunctions. "Property (*bhoga* plus *mamatva*) ...is," Sarkar observes, interestingly enough, "a *differentium* between the non-state and the state. And, juridically speaking, the property taken cognizance of by the state is *laukika*, i. e., worldly, material or secular, as the *Mitakshara*, the *Saraswati-vilasa*, and other law-books make it clear. Thus considered it is necessarily also a *differentium* between the state and the extra-state, e.g., a *Sukhayati*, the transcendental Land of Bliss...For, in that

super-sensual region ‘beings are not born with any idea of property even with regard to their own body’. Besides, according to the *Gita*, property is not to be acquired by ascetics and monks who desire to live...an extra-statal or super-political life...in which man is either a beast or a god” (*ibid.* : 261-262). Manu, Vasishtha and other writers of *Nitisastras* were, however, seriously concerned with the laukika property, the modes of acquiring it (seven modes in Manu, X, 115) or “three titles” (Vasishtha, XVI, 10) to it. The state backed by danda gives validity to these modes and titles.

The second acquisition of men through the state and danda is *dharma* which has in the Hindu political philosophy three connotations, viz., 1) law, 2) justice, and 3) duty. Dharma as law means both natural law or *jus naturale* (cf. *Brihadaranyakopaniṣat*, —I, 4, 14 ; *Āpastamba*—I, 7, 20, 8 ; *Vaśiṣṭha*—I, *alkya’s Code*—I, I, i ; etc.—all cited in *Sā* and positive law or *Vyāvahāra* (cf. Kautilya’s idea of *rājnām ājnā* i. e., the king’s command, or *Mīmamsasutra*’s aphorism of *chodanālakṣaṇohṛtho dharmah*, i. e., Dharma is that desired-for object (*artha*) which is characterised by command (*chodanā*) (Sarkar, 1937 : 268-269). The last-mentioned conception implies the cardinal element of the state, viz., *svamitva* or sovereignty which is inextricably intertwined with danda which maintains the vitality of *Dharma* from behind.

Dharma as justice lies (cf. *Sukra*, IV v, 7-11) in the discrimination (in keeping with the laws) of the good from the bad, ministers to the virtues of the ruler and the ruled, promotes common weal, and, thus, marks the state from the non-state. Finally, *dharma* as duty is likewise manifest only in the state and absent from the condition of *mātsya nyāya*. It is the fear of danda in the state that creates and maintains an order among men, each man taking care of his own duty (*svadharma*) (cf. the citations in Sarkar 1937 : 271).

Dharma is “materialised in space and time” in the form of *raṣṭra*. *Raṣṭra* provides *aiśvarya* (sovereignty) with “a

local habitation and a name". It signifies (Sukra, IV, iii, 2) "the country" or (a) both movable and immovable things and (b) the *prajā* or *prakriti* or population. If the *prajā* is not to infinitely remain an amorphous mass of *selb-staendig* atoms, it must have to follow the principle of *sva-dharma*, i. e., the members of the society must perform their respective 'duties' which "are really 'laws' turned inside out" (Sarkar, 1937 : 273). The members of a society naturally fall into "economic or professional groups, classes or orders,...the so-called 'castes' of India" (*idem*). But the classification of the people in ancient India into four varnas only is a "*conventional myth, at best a legal fiction*" (*ibid.* :274 ; emphasis added) in view of the presence of an "unlimited" number of these orders in reality (cf. Sukra, IV, iii, 22-23). From the standpoint of the individual, everybody has to pass through certain *āśramas* or well-marked stages or periods of life, which are "arbitrarily" known to be four. According to the Hindu political philosophers, if a people is to constitute a state, "every member of each of the *varnas* (no matter what their number and what their occupations) must have to observe the *Ordnung*, system or discipline, i. e., perform the duties (*sva-dharma*) of his station at each of the four *āśramas* or periods of life" (Sarkar, 1937 : 274). The violation of *sva-dharma* which is linked with *varnāśrama* may result into chaos or return to *matsya nyaya* and hence must be rectified through *danda*. "Varnasrama, though obviously an ethnico-economic and a socio-pedagogic term, is, thus," observes Sarkar, "fundamentally a political concept. It is an indispensable category in an organic theory of the state" (*ibid.* : 277). And it is "the greatest single contribution of Hindu philosophy to societal science" (*idem*).

When a people is organised into a state to secure an orderly life, it must ipso facto have independence (*svārājya, aparādhinatva*). In order to guarantee the supreme power of a state in its internal affairs, its ruler must consider its or his position vis-a-vis other states and rulers. Nay, he must be a *vijigishu*, i. e., he must have the aspiration to conquer and to become the *nabhi* or centre of gravity of a *mandala* or full

sphere around him, which is constituted by the states related to him as allies, enemies and neutrals, depending on their respective propinquity to or distance from the kingdom of the *Vijigishu*. The network of the mandala of a *vijigishu*, as is shown in the *Mahabharata* or the works of Kautilya or Kamandaka, Manu or Sukra, may be quite elaborate and also complicated in response to a plurality of factors. This doctrine, a profound contribution of the Hindus to political philosophy, implies "a world of eternally warring states," since each state has theoretically the same legitimate aspiration for scoring a point over its neighbours.

"The [Hindu] theory of the state is thus reared on two diametrically opposite conceptions :

1. The doctrine of *danda* which puts an end to matsya-nyaya among the praja or members of a single state ;
2. The doctrine of *mandala*, which maintains an international matsya-nyaya or the civil war of races in the human family" (*ibid.* : 290).

Relief from the international matsya-nyaya is suggested in the doctrine of *sārva-bhauma* (the ruler over the whole earth) and the concomitant doctrine of *Pṛjā Sārvabhaumica* (*ibid.* : 291). "The *sarva-bhauma*, *chakravartti*, *samrāt*, or *chāturanta* of Hindu political theory is identical with the *dominus omnium*, or lord of *universitas quaedam* in Bartolus's terminology, the *hwangti* of the Chinese" (*ibid.* : 294). The doctrine of *sarva-bhauma* is backed up by the concept of the gradation of rulers in the scale of *aiśvarya* (sovereignty), which again is related to a variety of political *yajna*, or sacrifices, the relative value of which is contested. But the authorities agree that "the rituals have a state-value on their face, and that it is the greatest power or the largest nationality alone that is entitled to the highest sacrifice (be it the *rājasūya* or the *aśvamedha*, or what not)" (*ibid.* : 290). Thus, the doctrine of *sarva-bhauma* is based on the concept of *digvijaya* (or conquest of the quarters). On the accomplishment of *digvijaya*, the *sarva-bhauma* receives as the overlord the unquestioning allegiance of all other rulers and puts an end to the *mandala* and the *mātsya-*

nyāya attending it. "The doctrine of *sārva-bhauma*, as the concept of federal nationalism, imperial federation, or the universe-state is thus the key-stone in the arch of the Hindu theory of sovereignty" (*ibid.* : 298).

The political philosophy described above had its basis in the incessant dynastic expansions, contractions, dissolutions, in ups and downs in the fortunes of families and individuals. "During the five thousand years [from the age of Mohenjo Daro] or so...the Indian peoples seemed all the time to carry out in life the *Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa* (VII, 15) ideal of being ever on the move, 'charaiveti', 'charaiveti' (go on, march on, etc.) and functioned so to say, as the living embodiments of 'social mobility', both horizontal and vertical" (*ibid.* : 128). It is thus not true then that the Hindus do not have a philosophy of progress or that they had a static social structure. Sarkar was "forced to suspect that the originators of many ruling dynasties in India were not born with blue blood in their veins..." (*ibid.* : 129). The personal qualifications, the proficiency in the use of arms as well as the diplomatic handling of situations accounted for the ascendancy of many lowly individuals to the positions of generals and premiers and finally to kingship. "In India as elsewhere the army has functioned as a great 'ladder'" (*idem*).

With the dynasties changing, political boundaries too were redrawn again and again with the resultant political tension and turmoil which gave the "adventurers" from all the social strata opportunities for vertical mobility, for getting "themselves admitted as Kṣatriyas, Brahmanas and what not" (*ibid.* 130). For, argued Sarkar, the world submits inevitably to the man, "who whatever be his origin is audacious enough to take up the ambitious messages of the Atharva Veda" and carry them out. In this Veda (XII, i, 54) "Puruṣa (man) is made to declare to the Earth as follows :

Aham aṣṭmi sahamāna
Uttaro nāmī bhūmiām
Abhiśādasmi viśvāśād
Āśām āśām viśvāsahi

"Mighty am I, Superior by name, upon the earth, conquering am I, all-conquering, completely conquering every region'" (*idem*). This all-round desire for conquest manifested in the declaration expressed itself "with equal force in the avocations of daily life" (*ibid.* : 302). Sarkar continued, "Vitalism, i.e., the philosophy of a life in the here and the now, is the clear message of the Vedas.... The Vedas held the mirror up to the social life of the time. And what was it but the life of fighters and colonizers....? The *Risis* who pioneered the settlements were not laying out cities and states in the 'other world'. Their vision was concentrated in this earth ... their mission was to enrich it with the Promethean fire" (*ibid.* : 302-303). Ghurye too showed that the Vedic people approached through sacrifice "the gods with requests for worldly and other goods and freedom from distress" (Ghurye, 1965 : 207).

IX

Sarkar admitted, of course, that a part of the literature of the Hindus has preached a keen solicitude for the "higher self" and an indifference to mundane affairs. The Upanishads provide an example. But even in the *Gita* he discovered the doctrine of *Yugantara* (transformation of the time spirit) and its note of optimism in the directive to the peasant and the prince to prepare the way for a messiah to change a corrupt and intolerable social situation (Sarkar, 1937 : 306). Even the *Dhammapada*, the collection of Buddha's sayings, harps on *appamada*, i.e., a life of vigilance, strenuousness, and activity.

The Tamil classics too show the zest for life. According to Sarkar, "South Indian culture was Brahmanized, Pitakized and Jainized in succession. The Sanskritisation of Tamil culture proceeded 'step by step'" (*idem*). The *Kurāl*, a South Indian classic of the early Christian era (c. 300 A.C.?) provides a bright example. It is divided into three parts according to *trivarga*, i.e., *dharma*, *artha* and *kama*. *Porul* which corresponds to *artha* claims greater

attention of its author than the other two interests. The *Kural* had similarity with, among others, the work of Bhartrihari (c. 800) who composed three satakas (centuries of verses). *Sringarasataka* (on love), *Vairagya-sataka* (on dispassion) and *Niti Sataka* (on morals and propriety). Thus while Bhartrihari composed verses on renunciation, he deliberated on love and morals as well. "Besides, even in the treatment of sex in the *Sringara-S'atuka* (stanzas 51-52, 99-100), the poet did not forget the duality or polarism of human personality. He was conscious as much of the spiritual in man as of the sexual. His 'whole duty of man' was oriented not only to the sensuous elements in life but also to the moral or social obligations as well as to the super-sensual" (Sarkar, 1937 : 311). The literature of the Hindus from the Mauryan times (3rd and 4th centuries B. C.) down to the Gupta ages (4th and 5th centuries B. C.) has been devoted to two "master-passions [that] have made man here and there and everywhere both in the East and the West", namely, love and war (*ibid.* : 309).

Life on this earth in its manifold varieties has been portrayed not only in the literature, painting and other works of art created by and for the higher orders of the Hindu Society but in folk-creations as well. Folk-poetry as embodied in the *Madhurā-vijayam* (a Telugu poem) or folk-imagination as expressed *Vysasayoga charitam* describes the "political deliverers" or "world-conquerors" as *yugāvatāras* or gods in human form. It exemplifies the secularization of the allegedly religious texts or rather the interpretation of the alleged godlore in terms of worldly personalities and human exploits.

"The sex-element is as important a factor in Hindu culture as the folk-element" (*ibid.* : 356). The context of the Radha-Krishna songs or what may in general be described as "the sex-hymns of Vidyapati" is provided not only by the art and literature of India but also by the incidents of her daily existence. These songs present some of the specimens of "actual folk-life or folk-lore elevated to the status of 'dignified' culture-lore" (*idem*).

The worship of limga or phallus is so deeply rooted in the consciousness of the Bengali and other Hindus that it cannot be treated as an aberration. Nor is the male sex deified only in its generative function. None the less prominent in Bengali and other Indian poetry is the deification or extolment of the female element. "The female sex as the embodiment of *sakti* or energy has been really accorded the highest and most comprehensive place in Bengali societal poetry" (*ibid.* : 357). The Hindus—the literate and the sophisticated as well as the folk—know Krishna to be a lover at one time and a warrior at another. If Radha is a sweetheart and a darling, Kālī, Chāṇḍī, Ambikā, Annadā, Bhavānī, etc., symbolise fighting spirit, courage, strength and energy. Rama stories provide examples of the ideal father, the ideal brother, the ruler, and so on. Similarly, if Radha symbolises maidenhood and young age, "Sita and Savitri are the idols of *Hausfrau's* daily life" (*idem*).

Sarkar had to admit the existence and influence of a certain kind of "idealism" implying the denial of the importance of life on this earth in Hindu *weltanschauung*. "The idealism of the *Vedanta*, such as in its extreme form might interfere with an objective investigation of the pluralities of the universe on the alleged ground that the many do not exist or that the only reality is the *Brahman*..." (*ibid.* : 55). But there are other systems in the Hindu philosophy, viz., the Sāmkhya, the Nyāya and the Vaiśeṣika, which offer signs of systematic thought as directed to the phenomena and processes of nature. The very possibilities of a "secular science, material or moral" may be discovered in the Sāmkhya philosophy, "furnished, as it is, with its purely naturalistic philosophy" (*ibid.* : 54). The method of approaching the problems of the universe in the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika systems appears in certain ways identical with that in the Sāmkhya. "Even *buddhi* (intelligence?) is grouped by the *Nyaya* philosophers in the same category as earth, water and other material substances" (*ibid.* : 55). Sarkar's interpretation appears to a certain extent corro-

borated by Seal who observed, “The Sāṅkhyā-Pātañjala system accounts for the Universe on principles of cosmic evolution ; the Vaiśeṣika-Nyāya lays down the methodology of science, and elaborates the concepts of mechanics, physics and chemistry” (1958 (1914) : 1-2).

As one looks at Buddha’s teachings regarding the impermanence and unsubstantiality of body, sensation, perception, and so forth, one simultaneously discovers the challenge to the same by Sachchaka Nighantaputta’s thesis of the supreme value of the Mother Earth in the realms of both nature and man in the *Chulasachchaka Sūtra* of the *Majjhima Nikāya* : “Whatsoever seeds and plants grow and expand and come to maturity do so all in dependence upon the earth, and, firm based upon the earth, and thus come to maturity” (cited in Sarkar, 1937 : 51). It is this “solid earth of mud and stone” that provides equally the basis for all human endeavours “What the earth is to plants and human beings, said he, that the body is to the individual” (*idem*). Sachchaka argued, “By body is this individual man, and firm-based upon body does he bring forth deeds good or evil” (*idem*). The argument was carried forward in relation to sensation, perception, etc. Sachchaka uncompromisingly championed the doctrine of the physical basis of life. However, “Sachchaka’s world-view, materialistic as it is, does not assert that life, mind, culture, or law, religion, philosophy, science and fine arts are but the reflexes of the physical foundations. The ‘casual’ relation is wanting in Sachchaka’s philosophy, but it is this concatenation that furnishes the keynote to ‘modern’ materialism” (*ibid.* : 52).

In the Hindu philosophy a direct appeal to materialism is found in what the Sukra authors describe to be the “*Nastikamatam* or system of the Nāstikas (IV, iii, 108-109)”. The Sukraniti records, “*Nastika* theory or scepticism is that which advocates, the predominance of Reason, the origin of all things from Nature (not from God) and the non-existence of the *Vedas*” (Sarkar, 1914b : 155 and 1937 : 55).

Back in 1921 (26) Sarkar referred to A. M. Pizzagalli’s

Carvaka, Nastika e Lokayatika. Contributo alla storia del materialismo nell' India antica which seemed to him the only complete and comprehensive study devoted to the materialist currents of thought in India. What in the work attracted Sarkar most was the view that "The Nastikas, like the Lokayatikas and the Charvakas, are not theoretical materialists. The real theoretical materialism of India is to be found in the *niti*" (cited in Sarkar, 1926 : 188). It was in politics, Pizzagalli maintained, that the Hindus came to work "emancipated from all prejudices". In this field their sole point of view was human which often led to the sacrifice of the moral". Sarkar, a champion of the *Nitiśastras* as evidence of the way of life envisioned and lived by the Hindus, approvingly cited the opinion of Pizzagalli that the "noble hedonism" of the *nitiṣastra* is of a superior order to the "vulgar hedonism" of the Cārvākas (*idem*).

Writing in 1937, Sarkar noted, after Pizzagalli, that the word *Nastika* may be traced back to *Maitrāyaṇiya-Upanishad* and occurs several times in the *Mahābhārata* or the *Manusamhitā*. But none of these instances mentions a *matam* or system of thought of the Nastikas. The word, 'Nastikā', "conveys simply the derogatory sense of a general character" (1937 : 56). Sarkar is totally silent as to why no systematic literature on materialism in ancient India is available today and why one has to find out what it was from the criticisms and ridicules hurled on it (cf. Chattopadhyaya, 1973 ; Nehru, 1947 (60) ; Shastri, 1928 & 1959). Was the entire literature destroyed by the priestly caste to annihilate the doctrine of materialism in this country ? In that case, is anybody justified in asserting that materialism enjoyed an equal prominence with idealism in the Indian society and culture ? One may, of course, suggest that the very eagerness of the authors of different conventional texts to discredit it (materialism or the view of Carvakas or Nastikas) shows how important it was in their eyes.

Sarkar kept quiet on the above problem. He was happy to note that the Sukra authors were bold enough to list it in a

schedule of 32 branches of learning along with the philosophical *matas* of historic tradition. This boldness might indicate their liberalism or the lateness of the period of origin of the treatise. The *Sukraniti* is contemporaneous with or posterior to Mādhava's *Sarvadarśanasamgraha* (compendium of all the philosophies) which first presented the nastika philosophy as a *mata*. It is described as *Brihaspatimata*, also as *Lokāyatika*.

And the Carvakas, professors of Nastika mata, derived their inspiration from Brihaspati, the purohita (priest) of the Vedic gods and "the traditional father of nitiśastra and arthaśastra". Madhava, a Vedantist, was "objective enough to give the devil his due" and accorded the "most anti-Vedantic system" a place of honour in his treatise, maybe, for dialectical reasons. Sukra's description of the Nāstikas agrees with Madhava's. Madhava observes that the Nastikas deny *paraloukikam artham* (other-worldly interests), and assert that everything exists through its own svabhāva (nature), the soul is identical with the body, the pursuit of pleasure is the highest goal of life. Their logic recognises no *anumana* (inference) but is based solely on *pratyaksha* (observation or perception). Whether the Sukra authors be prepared like the Cārvākas to deny the existence of the Vedas or not, 'the rationalism' and *svabhava* theory (naturalism) of the Carvakas would undoubtedly appeal to them. However, Sarkar's purpose was not to establish the identity of the *Sukraniti* with Sachchaka's opinions or the "Nyaya-Vaiśeṣika-Samkhyan" views, or finally, the Nāstika-Cārvāka-Lokayatika-matam. "Only one point has been sought to be established. It is that the anti-Vedantic, ...anti-idealistic trends of thought were varied enough all through the ages to furnish the positive foundations on which a materialistic scheme of *loka-hita* (utilitarianism) can be built up" (*ibid.* : 59-60).

X

One of the obstacles to the advancement of the Hindus in mundane affairs lies in their allegedly fatalistic outlook (Dasgupta, 1972 : 175, 207-208 ; Weber, 1958a : 332).

The idea of a 'pre-destined desert' as determined by the previous birth or divine will weakens the faith in the concept of cause as essentially an instrument in the hands of man and would breed a mood of surrender or other worldliness or both. Weber found the Indian *samsara* and *karma* teaching as the mainstay of this fatalism. "In the fate of the soul ethical value-determinism of *karma* obtained. From it there was no escape other than flight, by means of gnosis, into that other-worldly realm" (Weber, 1958a : 332). A strong note in negation of this idea was discovered by Sarkar in what he described to be the psychological principles of the *Nitisastras* of the Hindus.

Sarkar was happy to note the views of G. B. Bottazzi in his *Precursori di Niccolo Machiavelli in India ed in Grecia Kautilyā e Tucidide* that fate is indeed recognized by the Hindus as well as by the Greeks as a great force but it does not possess, as Maine believes erroneously in *Ancient Law and Custom*, an unavoidable character, nor does it dominate all human activity in the Greek or Hindu thought. According to Kautilya, as Bottazzi correctly highlighted, the only things that mankind owes to fate are calamities from fire, water, disease, famine and epidemic. "Everything else is the result of actions of human beings. Every thing that is produced tangibly is the fruit of human energy. This energy is known to be subject to the laws of thought". Yajnavalka (I, 351), *Markandeya Purana* (XXIII, 26), *Kamandaka* (IX, 36, XIV, 10, *Hitopadeśa* (I, 32) and other Hindu authorities in eulogy of *Puruṣakāra* ("energism"), are cited by Bottazzi. "The ethics of overpowering the *daiva* 'chance or luck) by *prudenza politica* is adumbrated in the *Kamandalī* (XIV, 21). And here the Hindus are at one with Thucydides (VI, 18, 2, II, 40, 1, II, 87, 3, V, 103, 2, II, 64, 2)" (Bottazzi a la Sarkar, 1921 : 197).

One of the chief logical postulates of the *Nitisastras*, rather the *raison d'être* of *danda-niti* of the Hindus is, according to Sarkar, "the supreme moral fact of the universe, viz., the autonomy of man, his freedom as a

'person' in regard to the command over the 'world'. *Atmayattau vriddhi vinasau*, says Chanakya (alias Kautilya)" (1921 : 31). One's expansion or advance (vriddhi) or destruction (vinasa) depends solely on one's own self. Aphorisms like this clearly indicate that the danda-niti did not preach fatalism but stressed the role of pauruṣa or human striving and energy in managing the affairs of the polity, rather, the business of life on this earthly earth. The notion of this creative will and intelligence of man is, Sarkar opined, what makes niti-sastra possible in a logical scheme of science. For, it implies that there is something in the very human nature which urges, towards conquest or expansion, which calls for progress, improvement and perfection. "Man, even if he begins as a hypothetical caliban....does not have to rest their (sic) *paurusha*, the innate maleness of humanity pushes him beyond himself. He is an eminently teachable or perfectible being" (ibid. : 32). A philosophy of *danda* necessarily assumes that the instrument of *danda*, like other instruments, can "only be an 'efficient' cause, but the 'matter' itself must be pliable, i.e., man must be something that can be worked upon and transformed. And this notion is contributed by the concept of *paurusha* with its emphasis on *l'elan de la vie*" (*idem*). If human life had been accepted as entirely pre-ordained by *praktana* or pre-destined by God, there would have been no question of altering or improving its course and quality by the learning of appropriate śāstras. Since the *danda niti* does not accept everything in human life as pre-determined either by *praktana* or by *daiva*, and believes in the changeability or perfectibility of human life and nature through human wisdom, the niti thought gives a conspicuous place to education or knowledge of the sastras (which is equivalent to *Vinaya* in the Buddhist philosophy).

The *Sukraniti* lays down that the knowledge of the śāstras arms man with the weapons to combat the evil and promote the good (Ch. I, lines 117-118). Not every evil is irremediable ;

therefore remedies are to be sought in the first instance, and failing them one will, of course, have to submit to the inevitable (lines 175-177). But the prime necessity in human life is the wisdom, the capacity to discriminate between the harmful and the beneficial (lines 178-110). And this is the result of mastery over the senses (line 180). Saikar referred to a number of lines in the Sukraniti (i. e., his English rendering of it) where the issue of fate or *daiva* versus human initiative and striving or *purushakara* has been examined in a direct and systematic manner.

The *Sukraniti* declared in its very first chapter (Lines 73-74) as follows : Man's work is the cause of his good or bad luck (prosperity or adversity). Even that which is called *praktana* (i. e., comes from previous birth) is really man's own work. Who can ever be without work ? (Sarkar, 1914b : 8). Sarkar added in the explanatory footnote, “प्राप्तेनमपि Men might say that destiny is determined by previous birth and not by one's कर्म or work. But this is refuted by the statement that this प्राप्तन् is, after all, nothing but कर्म” (*idem*). He admitted, however, in his comment on lines 89-94 that the treatise in praising कर्म or work as the sole factor of destiny “is very particular about the work done in past lives whose effects are transmitted through successive births” (*ibid.* : 9, f. n. 1). But he hastened to add that while man's intelligence and ways and means of action in his current birth are considered pre-ordained, they are depicted in the treatise as being governed by his *prak karma* “but not by an impersonal agent like Fate or blind chance” (*ibid.* : 9, f. n. 2).

More interesting observations in this context are found in the following lines in the same chapter of the *Sukraniti* : Lines 95-96 : Men who are wise and whose character deserves praise, greatly respect इन्द्रिया or Energy ; whereas the weaklings who are unable to exercise energy, to exert themselves, worship Daiva or Fate. 97-98 : Of course, everything in this world is founded on both Fate and self-exertion, and this latter is divided in two classes, that done in a previous birth,

and that done in this. Add to these the observations in lines 105—108. 105 : The pauruṣa of men is born of activities in this life. 106 : It is possible to protect the lamp with its wick and oil from the wind with great care. 107-8 : If it is possible to have remedies to the certain destinies it is good to discard the evils by dint of intelligence and might. Sukracharyya, the author of the *Sukraniti*, thus patently advocates puruṣakāra and disparages daiva. “In ll. 105-8”, commented Sarkar, “the author is discussing some of the forms which Pauruṣa or Energy should take in this life. One of these is the application of skill and force to do away with and remedy the evils of this world. For, it is possible to undo even the surest decrees of Fate भाविभावान् just as the lamp can be protected from the wind” (*ibid.* : 10, f.n. 3).

Sarkar read in this discussion of the question of volition versus fate in the Nitisastras, particularly in the *Sukraniti*, a corollary to the more fundamental concept in the Hindu philosophical milieu, viz., that concerning the relationship of *puruṣa* and *prakriti*. “*Prakriti* is mother nature, the female element in the universe, the *ying* principle of the Chinese classics. And *puruṣa* is the male, the active force, the *yang* element, the infilling or fecundating agency. It is the very nature of *puruṣa* to make use of the *prakriti*, to impregnate the environment, and create the objective manifestations of the world. or rather recreate it” (1921 : 32). It is interesting to note how Sarkar made use of a popular misrepresentation of the Sankhya view of Purusha and Prakriti. That Sarkar had recourse to the notions of Puruṣa and Prakriti in the Sankhya is evident from his reference to pages 2 and 3 in B. N. Seal’s work. But in the Sankhya-Patanjala system, as Seal himself noted, *Prakriti* is the “unmanifested unknowable ground” (Seal, 1958 : 10) of which no character can be predicated (अज्ञि—गूढमव्यक्तमलिङ्गः *ibid.* : 8 & 10), and Purusha is “the absolute” whose transcendental (nonmechanical) influence puts an end to the arrest of cosmic evolution (*ibid.* : 6). As Monier-Williams succinctly put it, “Beginning from the original eternal rootless germ

Prakriti (also called *Pradhana*, chief one ; *Avyakta*, un-evolved ; *Māyā*, power of illusion), the *Sankhya* counts up syntheticallytwenty-three other Tattwas or entities,— all productions of the first, and evolving themselves spontaneously out of it,—while it carefully distinguishes them all from a twenty-fifth, *Purusha*, the soul or spirit, which is in its own nature destitute of *Guṇas*, though liable to be bound by the *Guṇas* of *Prakriti*" (Monier-Williams, 1971 : 195). Thus, *Prakriti* is the sole originator of creations, of course, when it comes into union with *Purusha*. *Purusha* is a looker on uniting itself with unintelligent *Prakriti* for observing the process of creation. All *Prakriti*'s performances are solely for the benefit of soul who receives her favours ungratefully. "Indeed, the object of the *Sankhya* system is to effect the liberation of *Purusha* or soul from the fetters which bind it, in consequences of its union with *Prakriti*" (ibid. : 197). Thus Sarkar just reversed the qualities of *Purusha* (that is inactive) and *Prakriti* (that is active and is not of the feminine gender).

If the *Sukraniti* could not totally deny the role of *praktana* and *daiva*, it did simultaneously recognise, rather, emphasize, as Sarkar sought to highlight, the role of *purushakara*, or human volition and action in shaping the course of human life. Thus in lines 43-44 (ch. 1), it clearly lays down that the king is the cause of the setting on foot of the customs, usages and movements and hence is "the cause or maker of time (i.e., the creator of epochs). If the age or time were the cause (of usages and activities) there could be no virtue in the actors" (Sarkar, 1914b : 6). It repeats the same view in lines 119-120. According to Sarkar, the author of *Sukraniti* discusses here the question as to whether time is more important than man in regulating the affairs of the world "He [i.e., Sukra] takes for granted the doctrine that man is responsible for his *धर्म* and therefore must be a voluntary agent, regulating his own work by his own initiative and not at the will of other agents, e.g., time. And, therefore, the common excuse that it is the spirit of the age, the *कालधर्म* that has done such

and such things falls to the ground. It is rather advanced here that man is the maker of his age. The spirit of the age is what is created by the king's activities. In describing the superiority of the king over time the author propounds a very important truth that man is the architect of his own fate" (*ibid.* : 5, f. n. 4).

According to Sukra, the king is the maker of time and is the head of the kingdom. If the king is not a perfect guide, his subjects will get into trouble as a boat without the helmsman sinks in a sea (lines 129-130). And discipline is the chief thing to the guide or king. This comes through the dicta'es or precepts of the Sastras. This gives mastery over the senses, and one who has mastered the senses, acquires the Sastras (line 181). The king should first provide discipline to himself, then to the sons, then to the ministers, then to the servants, then to the subjects. He should never display his ability in only advising others (lines 193-85). One should bring to bay or discipline, by the hook of knowledge, the elephant of the senses which is running to and fro in a destructive manner [विप्रमाणिन्] in the vast forest of enjoyable things (lines 193-194). "This advice about the control and restraint of the senses is," commented Sarkar, "the fundamental and primary lesson in the Hindu system of moral education, and the simile about wild and unbroken elephants is one of the most common devices in Sanskrit literature" (*ibid.* : 15, f. n. 3). But does it not suggest withdrawal from the material world ?

Probably, stipulations like the above one led the occidental scholars like Weber to conclude that "According to the circumstances [supporting Indian soteriology], only wisdom provides ethical or magical power over the self and others. Throughout the 'teaching' this 'knowledge' is not a rational implement of empirical science such as made possible the rational domination of nature and man as in the Occident. Rather it is the means of mystical and magical domination over the self and the world : gnosis. It is attained by an intensive training of

body and spirit, either through asceticism or, and as a rule, through strict, methodologically-ruled meditation...such wisdom, in the nature of the case, remained mystical in character....." (Weber 1958a : 331). One reads indeed in the *Sukraniti* that the mind, covetous of the meat of enjoyable things [i.e. five विषय s, viz., रूप (sight), शब्द (sound), गन्ध (smell), रस (taste), स्पर्श (touch)], sends forth the senses and hence the mind should be controlled (lines 195-96) and that these "poison-like *Vishayas* are each capable of ruining men. Cannot the five combined cause destruction?" (lines 213-14). Sarkar, however flatly refused to read any suggestion of "a stoic apathy to all things mundane or the ascetic and almost monastic tendencies" in this advocacy of the restraint of passions. It is only the over-indulgence that is, according to the *Nitisastras*, to be avoided. Passions become vices only beyond a certain limit, but "otherwise they are quite legitimate". Thus, Sarkar pointed out, the *Sukraniti* stipulates that indulgence in gambling, women and drinking, when undue, spells disaster ; but within due limits, it gives rise to wealth, progeny and intelligence. "Each of these passions," he observed, has both its uses and abuses, अयुक्त—Undue, immoderate, excessive, युक्तियुक्त—due and moderate" (Sarkar, 1914b : 17, f. n. 3).

Sukra is "liberal enough to prescribe a normal use of wine in 'medical doses' " (Sarkar, 1921 : 33) For, wine, drunk, according to some measure, increases the talent, clears the intelligence, augments patience and makes the mind steadfast ; but otherwise it is ruinous (*The Sukraniti* ; lines 230-31). Further, sensuousness and anger are like wine and should be duly used—the former in the maintenance of the family, the latter against the enemies (line 232). Also, cupidity may be indulged in by a king (line 234). But princes should not indulge in sensuousness with regard to other's wives, cupidity in other's wealth and anger in punishing their own subjects (lines 235-236).

Because of such aphorisms as the above in the *Sukraniti*, Sarkar averred that Sukracharyya's system "does not blindly

advocate the absolute inhibition of the passions and the strict asceticism which leads to the killing of senses. In it, there is a place for gambling, drinking, woman, anger, sensuousness and other indulgences. He gives the devil his due, and does not forget the good to be derived from, and the uses that can be made of, even gambling and drinking. His morality is austere but not inhuman, and is adapted not to the abstract human beings shut up in a convent but to the complete men with all their passions and sensibilities, discharging their thousand and one duties in this world. Sukracharyya thus arrives at a system that is calculated to bring about the harmonious development of all faculties of man without repressing or unduly pushing forward any one" (Sarkar, 1914b : 18, f. n. 1). This explanation appears sensible enough. Sarkar drew the attention of readers more than once to the checks prescribed in the *Sukraniti* against wantonness of passions (*idem*, f. n. 3). This note of caution against excessive indulgence in passions, read along with the need of discipline on the part of the king as well as the subjects militates against such ethnocentric observation of the western scholars as the following : "The unrestricted lust for gain of the Asiatics in large and in small is notoriously unequalled in the rest of the world" (Weber, 1958a : 337).

XI

Sarkar thus gave the picture of an India that never totally neglected the material development and success of man on this earth and which registered significant advancement in different natural sciences. He reached certain general conclusions regarding the Hindu achievements in exact sciences.

First, like the Greeks, as Whewell admitted, the Hindus also were guided by the importunate curiosity with regard to the definite application of the idea of cause and effect to visible phenomena, made a clear distinction between a fabulous legend and a reason rendered, and

tried to ascend to a natural cause by classing together phenomena of the same kind. Secondly, epoch by epoch, the Hindu scientific investigation was not more mixed up with "metaphysics and superstitious hocus-pocus" than the European. Thirdly, thus developed in India a vast body of specialized scientific literature, each branch with its own technical terminology. Fourthly, scientific investigation was not limited to any particular period of Indian history, to any particular region of India, or to any race or class of the Hindu population. Finally, no one hypothesis or theory governed Hindu thought in any epoch, or monopolized the researches of all investigators in successive epochs, "The intellectual universe of the Hindus was 'pluralistic'. There were different schools criticising, correcting and modifying one another's inquiries" (Sarkar, 1918a : 76-77). This intellectual milieu was supported by a more or less well organised political order and could thus ensure a cumulative growth of sciences and techniques.

Yet, by his own admission, the whole science of the Hindus, as reported by him, "belongs to the what may be truly called the prescientific epoch of the history of science" (*ibid.* : 3). And it is obvious to everybody that during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the Indians have been lagging far behind the western nations in science and technology. How would one account for it, particularly when one recalls Sarkar's recurrent emphases, in the latter part of his career, on the similarities between the value systems and socio-political and economic organisations of the Asians or oriental and the Euro-Americans or occidental ? Sarkar's reply was that "there was hardly any difference between Europe and Asia at the time of the French Revolution (1789). The real and only cause of the parting of ways between the East and the West, nay, between the mediaeval and the modern was the discovery of steam, or rather its application to production and transportation. The steam engine effected an industrial revolution during the first three decades of the nineteenth century. It is this revolution which has ushered

in the ‘modernism’ of the modern world in social institutions, science and philosophy, as well as brought about the supremacy of Eur-America over Asia” (*ibid.* : 7). But the answer only begged the question. Sarkar failed to adequately explain why the industrial revolution occurred in Europe while it eluded the East. “After all”, rightly observed Mukhopadhyay, “if social qualities were similar in Europe and Asia at the time prior to Industrial Revolution, then what can possibly explain this strangely different behaviour of history?” (1974 : 59 & 1979 : 220),

It is not, however, not true, as Mukhopadhyay thought (*idem*), that Sarkar never faced the riddle. He wrote in one place, “In the nineteenth century and during the first years of the twentieth it may almost be said that Asia was for all practical purposes lying dead” (Sarkar, 1921 : 5). In another place he remarked, “বাংলার শিল্প-বাণিজ্যের ঘৃণার মূল কারণ এক অদৃশ্য ক্ষমতা কি এশিয়া, কি ইয়োরামেরিকা সকল ভূখণ্ডের মানবজাতিই এক আদশে চলিয়াছে। ইয়োরামেরিকা বর্তমান জগৎ সংষ্টি করিয়াছে হাতের জোরে এবং মাথার জোরে। এই সংষ্টিকার্যে এশিয়া এক কঁচাও সাহায্য করিতে পারে নাই। এই ঘৃণাগুরু এশিয়াবাসীর মগজ পঁচয়া গিয়াছিল। কিন্তু বর্তমান জগৎ সংষ্টি হইবামাত্র ইয়োরামেরিকা প্রায় ঘোল আনাই বদলাইয়া গিয়াছে। এই জন্যই আজ গতানুগতিক পক্ষী এশিয়ার নরনারী ইয়োরামেরিকানদিগকে কোনভাবে চিনিয়া উঠিতে পারিতেছে না” (পরিবার, গোষ্ঠী ও রাষ্ট্র [ইতিহাসের আর্থিক ব্যাখ্যা]] কলিকাতা, ১৯২৪ : ১।) . “Before the advent of the age of trade and industry propelled by the power of steam engine the races of all the regions, be it in Asia or in Euro-America, were guided by the same ideas and values. The modern world has been created by the people of Euro-America with the power of their bone and brawn and brain. Asia failed to contribute even an iota to this creative endeavour. *In this age (the modern era) the brains of the Asians became putrid.* But since the very moment of the creation of the modern world, the metamorphosis of Euro-America has almost been complete. It is precisely because of this that the Euro-

Americans appear at the moment totally strange to the men and women of tradition-bound Asia" (Sarkar, 1924a : xxiv, emphasis added). The explanation appears to be glib as Sarkar did not at all mention why and how the mental and intellectual torpor of the Asians set in. Happily enough, Sarkar made elsewhere more serious attempts than this.

Before proceeding to examine that attempt, the author owes an explanation to the readers for describing the above explanation by Sarkar as simplistic For, Arnold J. Toynbee also talked of a "petrified life in death" (cited in Sorokin, 1963 : 117) between the first sub-phase of the declining phase of civilizations like the Hindu civilization, viz., their breakdown, and their last sub-phase, i. e., their dissolution. According to his theory of birth, growth and dissolution of "civilizations" which, according to him, constitute the "intelligible fields of historical study," no less than sixteen out of twenty-six civilizations (which have so far characterised world history) are by now dead and buried. Of the remaining ten surviving civilizations, which include the Western, Hindu, Far Eastern, Chinese and Japanese,—all save the Western are "in their last agonies," under the threat of either annihilation or assimilation by the Western civilization. Even the last-mentioned is in a state of crisis. Civilizations (or societies) like the Far Eastern civilization in China or the civilization of the Hindus in India can, like a petrified tree-trunk, linger in a state of "life-in-death". Nevertheless, the destiny of most, if not all, civilizations, seems to be a final dissolution sooner or later. Though the western society seems to have had all the symptoms of breakdown and disintegration, Toynbee's analysis leaves the hope for its redemption through a miracle, a reprieve to be granted by divine mercy to the people in the west. Sarkar did not discuss Toynbee's ideas. But the probability of his rejection of such a thesis of "petrification" of a civilization and its final dissolution can safely be inferred from his opposition to any theory hinting at the "gently-sloping route of decline" of human civilization,

or, more particularly, of the modern civilization (cf. Mukhopadhyay, Uma, 1957).

VTSP, however, records, Sarkar's reactions to the ideas regarding *The Decline of the West* by Oswald Spengler. Spengler preceded Toynbee and the ideas concerning history of both the thinkers belonged to the same genre (Sorokin, op cit.: 194). Spengler, Sorokin points out, ridicules the linear history of mankind. His philosophy of history sees in place of Mankind "that empty figment of *one* linear history...the drama of a number of mighty Cultures, each springing with primitive strength from the soul of a mother region to which it remains firmly bound throughout its whole life-cycle..." It has witnessed so far eight such great Cultures, the latest of which is the western or Faustian.

Every culture passes through "the age-phases of the individual man. Each has its childhood, youth, manhood and old age." At childhood a Culture is a young and trembling soul, "heavy with misgivings." As it approaches its noon-culmination, it becomes virile, austere, controlled, and clear in its individual lineaments and self-assured in its power. Finally, when the fire in the Culture's soul dies down, it enters its last phase—that of civilization. "Every Culture has its own Civilization. The Civilization is the inevitable destiny of the Culture." Civilizations are the final, the most external and artificial states of Cultures : "They are a conclusion, the thing become succeeding the thing becoming, death following life, rigidity following expansion, intellectual age and the stone-built petrifying world-city following mother-earth and the spiritual childhood of Doric and Gothic. They are an end, irrevocable, yet by inward necessity again and again.... They may, like a worn-out giant of the primeval forest, thrust their decaying branches towards the sky for hundreds of thousands of years, as we see in *China*, in *India* and in the *Islamic world*" (emphases added). While in this "petrified form," the dwindling creative powers of some civilizations rise once more in a half-successful effort and "produce the classicism, common to all dying cultures. But, ultimately,

"weary, reluctant, cold, it [culture at the phase of civilization] loses its desire to be", and gradually but irreversibly proceeds to its grave. Before its death, however, the culture-civilization experiences "the spell of second religiosity", the fever of a new religious movement, which marks the end of its life-course, and possibly the emergence of a new culture.

Sarkar presented a still briefer version than this bare sketch of Spengler's cyclical theory of change of cultures. He, however, noted that in Spengler's schema the civilization phase of culture witnesses the emergence of the world city. And, world cities like Pataliputra or Rome or Bagdad or London are "wholly intellect." They are the symbols of soullessness. They are not the "homes". The birth of these world cities entails their death by their growth and their contrast of riches and poverty, by their artificial stimulation and their *taedium vitae*, and finally by the increasing sterility of the megalopolitan man. These generalisations by Spengler about the great cities, megalopolises or cosmopolises "exhibit in their highest intensity as well as in their widest extensity (sic) all the features of what he calls *civilization*, which in his *metaphysical interpretation*, represents the final or "decadent" stage of every culture in all the cycles of world-history. In the present author's interpretations of social and cultural dynamics it is not reasonable to treat the climax, the zenith or the boom of any development as its decline and fall in a special sense, or in a particularly moralizing manner" (Sarkar, 1941 : 99 ; emphases added). Spengler was correct to point out the vices or evils of the modern, urban civilization of the west. But vices or evils are ubiquitous. They are present in every culture at every stage of its existence or development. It is illogical to ignore it. It is equally unphilosophical to harp and moralize upon the "plague-spots" of the latest developments as the "end of the life's course of every great culture." The evils are not *sui generis* at any stage. "Unless a philosopher be prepared to describe every transformation, change-over, remaking or reconstruction as the 'death symbolism of the definitive thing become' it is sheer hyperbole or meaning-

less verbosity to describe the latest stages in human development, embodied as they are in the cosmopolises or great cities as 'standing at the end of life's course' " (*idem*).

Sarkar's theory of progress admits of changes of style in literature or art or of forms in economy, polity and religion. In this process of change the old style or form disappears not only with undesirable or evil elements but with some desirable elements as well, that were good (*shiva*), beautiful (*sundara*), true (*satya*). Similarly, the advent of the new too is a mixed bag. With the appearance of good elements in the new style or form, some undesirable elements too manifest themselves. Spengler's foreboding of the doom of modern Culture-Civilization because of the evils in it and his yearning for a new Culture which will be free from all kinds of evils or shortcomings was, therefore, not acceptable to Sarkar. Sarkar's theory of culture as a theatre of perpetual conflict between good and evil was opposed to Spengler's views. But more serious was his opposition to any thesis projecting the disintegration or annihilation of the modern Civilization, or for that matter, any Culture or Civilization in its totality. Though in one part of the VTSP (*ibid.* : 494) Sarkar noted that Spengler's "cyclical theory" envisioned the regeneration of life with the substitution of the will to victory of the exact sciences of the modern western civilisation by the "new element of inwardness", in another part of the same work he observed, "The possibility of *wiedergeburt* (rebirth) has been ignored by Spengler" (*ibid.* : 100). This denial by Spengler of renewal or remaking of culture was possibly a strong reason behind Sarkar's declaration of himself to be "generally un-Spenglerian in my fundamental ideology" (*ibid.* : 497). "After all", wrote Sarkar in 1928, "it is only a truism that says that one form or style of life is going to be replaced by another. But, evidently, there are few students of objective history who, as Spengler is not unaware, would be prepared to accept the nineteenth and twentieth 'centuries, in point of values, as inferior to the preceding centuries, *not to speak of marking*

a definite pathway downwards...If the eighteenth century can be conceded to be 'Greek' and to represent *kultur*, there can be no philosophical justification for considering the twentieth century to be 'Roman' and as embodying '*Zivilisation*' " (1928 : 286).

The entire gamut of Sarkar's indological and socio-logical studies has been pervaded by a quest for the sources of a possible rejuvenation of the Indian (Hindu) culture in its past so that it could draw its sustenance from its tradition for facing up the challenge of the industrially and scientifically advanced nations in the west. Any idea of decaying of a culture or a people does not fit in with the tenor of his life's work. Sarkar, the sociologist of progress, wrote unequivocally. "Progress has...always to be envisaged in terms of the upward trends of new regions, new races, new classes, and new forces. *The eventual fall of the Aryan as suspected by Lapouge and Amman does not and need not necessarily be taken as equivalent to a disaster to mankind and world-civilization. Culture is all the time being enriched or rejuvenated with new values.* The doctrine of progress, therefore, has need to be adapted to these new facts and situations" (1936 : 82 : emphasis added). Sarkar's interest in history as a story to be told lay in his interest in history as a story to be made. His account of the past must, therefore, have been a depiction of the story of the evolution of a living reality, now displaying an exuberant vitality, now undergoing an apparently anaemic phase marked by a seeming diminution of its vigour. Sarkar's acceptance of the idea or thesis of death or petrification or putrefaction of the Indian (or Hindu) civilization (or, for that matter, any civilization) would have meant his preparedness for taking the role of undertaker of this civilization. Sarkar never imagined this role either for himself or for his countrymen. Any utterance of decay or putrefaction of the Indian culture and civilization in Sarkar's writings must therefore be taken for one made in a hurry or through inadvertence.

XII

As far back as 1914, Sarkar controverted the views of P. C. Ray regarding the causes of the decline of scientific spirit in India. According to Ray, in ancient India useful arts and sciences, as distinguished from mere handicrafts, were cultivated by the higher classes. In the Vedic age the rishis or priests did not form an exclusive caste of their own and followed various professions according to their convenience. But all this was changed when the Brahmins reasserted their supremacy on the decline or expulsion of Buddhism. "The caste system was established *de novo* in a more rigid form. The drift of Manu and of the later Puranas is in the direction of glorifying the priestly class which set up most arrogant and outrageous pretensions" (Ray, 1956 : 240 ; emphasis added—not cited by Sarkar). Ray pointed out that the dissection of dead bodies advocated by Susruta for students of surgery and experiment and observation became impossible because of Manu's injunctions against the touch of a corpse which led to defilement. The handling of a lancet thus became prohibited and anatomy and surgery fell into disuse. "It was considered equally undignified to sweat away at the forge like a Cyclops" (*idem*). Thus, the cultivation of the *kalas* by the more refined classes soon became unthinkable. "The arts thus being relegated to the low castes, and the professions made hereditary, a certain degree of fineness, delicacy and deftness in manipulation was no doubt secured, but this was accomplished at a terrible cost. The intellectual portion of the community being thus withdrawn from active participation in the arts, the *how and why* of the phenomenon—the co-ordination of cause and effect—were lost sight of. The spirit of enquiry gradually died out among a nation, naturally prone to speculation and metaphysical subtleties, and India for once bade adieu to experimental and inductive sciences. Her soil was rendered morally unfit for the birth of a Boyle, a Descartes, or a Newton, and her very name was all but expunged from the map of the scientific

world for a time" (*ibid.* : 240-241 ; the whole paragraph was quoted by Sarkar).

Sarkar did not subscribe to the above view. While he did recognise the contribution of the western thinkers mentioned by Ray, he felt at the same time that the Hindu thinkers during the period of alleged decline were called upon to perform the task of "preservation of national existence and the conservation (with necessary adaptation or modification) of the culture of their race against the inroads of aggressive Islam. The greatest achievement of the Hindus and the most marvellous feat of their genius consisted in this that, while other races had to succumb to the steam-roller of the 'Koran, the sword or the tribute' and extinguish all vestiges of their national traditions and institutions, the Hindus alone not only succeeded in withstanding this levelling influence and maintaining their *individuality and original race-consciousness*, but also in assimilating and utilising the new world-forces in the interest of their own expansion, development and progress" (PBHS, 1914 : 210).

According to Sarkar, "But for this assimilative capacity, this extraordinary power of displaying and distributing their energies in a latent form in the work of social reconstruction and synthetic readjustments, the whole civilisation of the Hindus would have been swept off the face of the earth and have been driven underground" (*idem*). A proper and scientific reading of the socio-political conditions prevailing in India with the advent of Islam vould show "*not that the Hindu national mind was slain during this period*" but that it addressed itself to the more urgent problems of the time. "The struggle was between one socio-religious ideal and another socio-religious ideal, for the Mussalmans did not bring with them any other instruments of culture, ostensibly or as a matter of course. That being the conflict, 'competition' and instinct of self-preservation induced the people of Hindusthan to present not greater and greater original discoveries and inventions in science, industry and philosophy..... but mainly a more liberal and elastic inter-

pretation of their socio-religious ideals and institutions, a more philosophic relaying of the foundations of their social and domestic system, necessitated by the changes in the circumstances of their age" (*ibid.* : 211) . If culture of a race is relative to the conditions of the age, the contributions of the Hindu thinkers in reorganising the old order into a new order were no less important than the accomplishments of the western scientists.

"Universal History," Sarkar observed, "if philosophically and biologically interpreted, yields one fundamental lesson about human progress, viz., that the culture of a race is 'relative' to the conditions of the age. According to this doctrine of the Relativity of Culture, which again is corollary to the great Biologico-sociological Doctrine enunciated above, it would be easily admitted that the epoch from Bacon to Linnaeus, Humboldt, Whitney and Herbert Spencer has not probably done for humanity an *iota* of work in any way nobler or greater than what has been achieved in Hindusthan by the band of master-minds from Kavira, Chaitanya, Tukārāma, Nānaka and any other givers of social laws and morals to the days of Rāmaprasāda, Rāmamohana, Vidyāsāgara and Rāmakriṣṇa Paramahamsa" (*ibid.* : 211-212 ; emphasis added). Sarkar appeared here to be influenced by a narrow Hindu outlook. Whatever veracity the preceding analysis by Sarkar might have, one would wonder whether the social reorganisation he talked of led to a more liberal and accommodative outlook among the Hindus or if a more closed social system consisting of equally closed subsystems with hiatuses among them, was substituted for the old one, as was alleged by Ray.

It is, however, interesting to note a similarity (at least, of a part) of the above analysis with the following observation by Marx : "Arabs, Turks, Tartars, Moguls, who had successively overrun India soon became *Hinduized*, the barbarian conquerors being, by an eternal law of history, conquered themselves by the superior civilization of their subjects". And Sarkar would have partly agreed with the next sentence from Marx : "The British were the first conquerors *superior*,

and, therefore, inaccessible to Hindu Civilization" (Marx, June 24, 1853 in Marx, 1975 : 30). Marx, however, did not share the opinion of those who believed in a golden age of Hindustan. He blamed the ancient traditions of the religion of Hindustan and the little village communities "contaminated by distinctions of caste and by slavery" for subjugating man to external circumstances instead of elevating man to be the sovereign of circumstances (Marx, June 10, 1853 in Marx, op. cit. : 17-18). Sarkar, too, would accept that the British or Western Civilization, particularly after the Industrial Revolution, was superior to the Hindu or Indian. But he would not admit that this superiority was inaccessible to the Hindus or Indians. This superiority of the occident over the orient was a temporary and temporal one which could be appropriated quickly by the latter, if the people there put in necessary effort. Probably, this very thought led Sarkar to abandon the search for specificity of the socio-cultural system(s) of the Indian or the Asians and the particular historical causes of stagnation of their civilizations and engage in a search for somewhat mechanical uniformities between the east and the west. Had Sarkar continued his studies regarding this recondite area of Indian history, some more useful information or a more insightful analysis might have come from him. And, in this endeavour he would have received some help from his contemporaries like Jagendranath Bagchi Tarka-Samkhya-Vedantatirtha.

Bagchi pointed out that between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries a plethora of philosophical views emerged in India. The propounders of these views created, because of their illiberal outlook, many closed circles which bred a climate of mutual hostility that came to pervade India that had been lacking in political consciousness. Because of the absence of broadness of vision, the people of different segments too came to embrace one or the other of these cloistered groups and, eventually, harbour malice against one another. Since parochialism became exceedingly strong during this period, in the realm of Dharma sastras too speci-

fic Smriti-Nibandha treatises were composed in and for particular territorial (as also cultural) segments and these, in their turn, nurtured and strengthened the spirit of narrow regionalism. At the time of the downfall of a nation, the intellect of the learned too is clouded by wrong notions or incorrect ideas. People come to stress individual or sectional interests more than the collective interests. The country, consequently, became divided into many parts without any bond of unity among themselves (1356 B. S. / 1949 : 60).

The chief reason behind the above phenomenon was, according to Bagchi, the neglect of Dandaniti by the Aryan or Hindu philosophers and literateurs, which was the result of their unnatural disinterest in worldly matters. And, it was the consequence of their combat with the Buddhist philosophers who propagated the unreality of the worldly affairs.

Bagchi tells us that treatises of the Hindus never ignored the importance of Dandaniti or the art of managing the affairs of the world. Thus, the *Manusamhita* or The Laws of Manu, laid down that "Traividyebhyastrayeeem Vidyat Dandanitimca Saswatim / Anvikshikim • Catmavidyam Vartarambhamasca lokatah" (*Manusamhita*, VII, 43 ; Nyaya-tirtha, 1963 : 124 ; Saptatirtha, 1954 : 643) [From those versed in the three Vedas let him [the king] learn the threefold (sacred science), the primeval science of government, the science of dialectics. and the knowledge of the (supreme) Soul ; from the people (the theory of) the (various) trades and professions. Bühler's translation, 1964 (1886) : 222]. The Mahabharata contains slokas like "Trayee canvikshiki caiva varta ca Bhratarśabha / Dandanitisca bipula vidyastatra nidarsitah." Kautilya's Arthashastra divided sciences or branches of knowledge into four, viz, Anvikshaki (comprising the philosophy of Samkhya, Yoga and Lokayata), Varta (agriculture, cattle-breeding and trade), and Danda-Niti (science of government) (cf. Shamasastry, 1915 : 6). Discourses on Dandaniti had formed an important part of the literary creation of the Hindu poets from the time of the epics like the Ramayana down to the 6th Century B. C. when

Dandin composed his *Dasakumaracarita*, the 8th canto of which contained a detailed discussion of the principles of *niti-sastra*. But it was since the time of Vanabhatta, the court-poet of the emperor, Harshabardhana, i.e., the 7th century, that dandaniti came to be ignored or disregarded. And, the subsequent period witnessed the political fragmentation of India. The sway of other-worldliness of Buddhism over the people in the country during this time was a concomitant feature or, rather, the causative factor.

If Bagchi's thesis is totally accepted, how does one account for the facts that Jeevaka, a famous practitioner of medicine, and that Nagarjuna, "the most conspicuous figure among the Indian alchemists" (Ray, 1956 : 116), were Buddhist by faith ? There are other difficulties too. In different places of the same work Bagchi mentions different centuries as the period of decline of the importance of Dandaniti in the literature of the Hindus, which was caused through the influence of Buddhism. In one place it is the end of the seventh or the eighth, in another, ninth and tenth, in a third place, the fourteenth and fifteenth, in a fourth place, the twelfth, century or centuries.

The span is so long that it is difficult to establish an association between the ascendancy and dominance of the Buddhist *anschauung* of other-worldliness as the most important cause of decline of interest of the Hindus in managing worldly affairs and therefore, Dandaniti, on the one hand, and all these different periods on the other. First, the Buddhist dominance, if there were any, did not last so long and, secondly, so many other factors entered into the socio-cultural milieux in India during all these ages. Further, Bagchi wants us to notice that since the age of *Naishadhacaritam*, i.e., the twelfth century, an excessive stress on love and eroticism came to pervade the literature of the Hindus. This near-total obsession with erotic love to the neglect of every other element of life (including dandaniti) indicated a debasement of taste of the Hindus and the attendant degeneration in their way of life. But to hold the influence of Buddhism singularly

responsible for it all is patently a biased view. Finally, was the multiplicity of regional smriti-nivandhas the cause or the result of political fragmentation ? Did it help political fragmentation or did it stop farther cleavages by recognising the local mores and customs through their codification and sanctification in regional smriti-nivandhas ?

Because of his obsessive antipathy towards Buddhism Bagchi did not think over these questions. But his view that fractionation of the intellectual order of the Hindus (whatever the reasons might be) gave rise to the conceit that obfuscated the differences between the relative and the absolute, the local and the pan-Indian, nay, the universal, and thus sowed the seeds of narrowness and parochialism, prejudice and superstition in the hearts of the Hindus is worth-examining. A scholar with Sarkar's erudition could have enlightened us with solutions to some of the problems raised by Bagchi as also to those which might arise as responses or reactions to Bagchi's views. But his haste in explaining away the peculiarities in Indian history in his bid to search out the parallels of what happened in India in the history of the Occident and secondly, his occasional over-eagerness to justify whatever happened in India of the yore ended that possibility.

Sarkar seemed to be much less ethnocentric in his explanation of one obstacle to the development of science among the Hindus. Bhim Chandra Chatterjee quoted from various sources like the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, the lore of Vidyapati, etc., to prove that the Hindu sages had conceived the idea of evolution long before it was dreamt by any other nation. Sarkar remarked that "these truths of Botanical Physiology were known to the Hindus simply as facts, but no trace has been found as yet regarding their knowledge of the 'science' of physiology, i.e., how these take place in nature ; in short, they have observed the facts without caring to 'explain' them or assign reasons" (ibid. : 203). Of course, it was the task of the posterity to continue and, if possible, to improve upon the work bequeathed to it by the preceding generations. But did the line of continuity

remain unbroken among the Hindus ? If not, one comes back again to the old question, why did it break ?

It is interesting to note that Sarkar himself provided a brief answer to the above question. And, he linked it with a peculiarity of the Hindu socio-cultural system at a particular period in history, though he did not specify the period and though here also he was haunted by the idea of finding out similarities of the Hindu social system with the European social system. Sarkar thought that Kant is the father of modern materialism for the West, and his counterpart in India is Vivekananda. Prior to Kant, people in Euro-America were under the influence of the Catholic Church. The next world, the other-worldly interests, the supramundane thoughts had been considered to be "the only glorious things". But in the meantime the west experienced the slow and gradual emergence of experimental sciences, and the discovery of the laws of nature or matter. The honest intellectuals could not but reckon with their truth. "It was Kant who for the first time had the courage to declare in so many words that nature, matter, the earthly world were no less glorious than man, the person, the inner world. The laws of Nature were as immutable and absolute, said he, as the laws of human spirit. It is on this Kantian recognition of the equal dignity of the two worlds that the knowledge of Nature, investigations into the natural sciences, researches in material interests have been able to grow in the same unhampered manner as researches into the inner world....." (Sarkar in Dass ed.), 1940 : 41).

Instead of discussing the validity of the above statement, one should for the present purpose concentrate on what follows : "The situation in India was", Sarkar observed, "parallel to that in Europe. The dignity of Nature had been denied to the exclusive recognition of the dignity of spirit, if not in practical life, at any rate in the dominant philosophical schools. *This obsession by the affairs of the spirit, although confined to the academic world, engendered an intellectual and moral hypocrisy among the men and women*

used as they are to the ordinary family life, arts and crafts, commercial and social pursuits. In order to profess their reverence for things of the spirit they got into the habit of declaring, in any case, verbally, their alleged apathy and indifference to the most intimate concerns of their daily life" (*idem*; emphasis added). Sarkar continued, "Among intellectuals those who studied the *Sankhya* system of philosophy were *looked down as materialists* because they were researchers into *Prakriti* (Nature). The princes among philosophers were considered to be those who specialized in the topics of the soul, e.g., the students of *Vedanta*. India like Europe was therefore in need of a man who could say with all the honesty he could command that *Prakriti* was no less sacred than *Purusha* (Man) and that the pursuit of material sciences and material prosperity was as godly as that of the sciences and activities bearing on the soul" (*ibid.* : 41-42). This man is, according to Sarkar, Vivekananda.

The foregoing analysis brings, as if through the backdoor, the idea of other-worldliness of the Indians into Sarkar's cognitive mapping of the tradition of India, which he so long most scrupulously tried to deny. Further, it located hypocrisy in the intellectual circles as well as in the parlours of common people of the Hindu society to be an impediment to the material progress of the Hindus or Indians. And, it may be recalled here, P. C. Ray too blamed this hypocrisy or "most arrogant and outrageous pretensions" of the priestly class of the Hindu society for its intellectual torpor and stagnation. Probably, Sarkar also, pragmatist as he was (cf. *sup.* 320-43), believed like Ray that the predicament of the Indian society was created by the hiatus between the classes and the masses, by an emphasis on conformity to a rigid social structure, and lack of preparedness for change by a sort of obscurantism. He, therefore, most sincerely tried to break the barriers between the "upper ten thousand" and the rest of the society through the National Education Movement, to promote among his countrymen "*mistrification*, industrialisation, economic

modernisation combined with culture, humanism and spirituality" (1946, xii). In order to break conformism, he hailed "the spirit of modern India [as] the spirit of constructive protest and assimilative challenge" (1937 : 413). Sarkar declared in *Creative India*, "In every phase of life in India today, political or cultural, economic or artistic, everybody who is anybody is a fighter, a fighter against obscurantism, Hindu or Moslem, some alien chauvinism, some vassalage in art, some industrial thralldom, or some subjection in scientific, sociological, economic and philosophical theory. It is in such flights that the emancipation of his soul lies. Verily, today, as ever in the past *sakti*, energy or force, is the very deity of creative India's men and women" (ibid.: 415 ; emphasis except that on the Sanskrit word added). Though Sarkar proclaimed "this energism (*sakti-yoga*)" to be but normal with the genius of the people of India, his repeated harpings on certain values noted in the preceding lines have probably been necessitated by their absence from the ambient culture of the Indians, at least, at a certain period of their history.

XIII

This somewhat critical account of Sarkar's attempts at the discovery of the Indian society and culture would remain incomplete without a reference to his ideas regarding the two important institutions of the Hindu society, viz., joint family and caste. Sarkar noticed in *Ingrajer Janmabhumi* (1922) how neolocality as distinguished from patrivilocality of the Hindu (joint) family was stressed in Britain (rather, in the modern west) with its emphasis on individualism and nuclear family. Further, the English of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries applied the principle of division of labour not only to the field of science but also to the arenas of trade and commerce, matters relating to the government and familial and social life.

Its impact on family was clearly manifested in the differen-

tiation of its functions. The task of socialising and educating the children was taken out of family and entrusted to the schools or boarding schools specialised in the job. By contrast, the pupils in the 'domestic system' of the Hindus used to get an opportunity to live amidst the members of the family of the preceptor or teacher. While they studied there, they performed various other activities which characterize life in a family, viz., taking care of the cattle of the teacher-householder, nursing the sick or the ill. Their character or personality developed in this way. Indeed, differentiation of educational and other functions of family has never been so sharp in India as it has been in Great Britain (or in the west). Family is regarded by the Hindus as an important place for learning ideas and skills necessary for life.

Similarly, in the Hindu way of life family is also the temple or abode of gods and goddesses. The rhythm of life in family is attuned to a series of daily and calendrical rites and rituals connected with the worship of the household deity, the salagrama-sila (a black geode) symbolising Lord Vishnu, the image or phallic symbol of Lord Siva, the *tulsi* or basil plant, or the lighting (offering) of the Akasadeepa or Akasa-pradeepa (a lamp or lantern suspended from the top of a pole set up by the Hindus during the month of Kartika, i.e., Oct.-Nov., in reverence to their deceased ancestors), and the like. In case of the English people the Church like the educational institutions has been separated from family. The Church is specialised in religious functions. So the arena of religious activities is to be found in churches and not at home or in family.

Other functions too have in a similar manner been separated in the west from home or family and different institutions have grown up independently of family. Myriads of associations have developed in England to realise the countless goals like helping the poor, the old and the infirm, extending charity to the needy and the orphans, promoting social or public welfare, rearing and tending of the cattle, showing kindness to the animals, etc., etc. These organisations are separate from and independent of one another as well as

family. They hardly have any connection with the day-to-day life at home. “কিন্তু হিন্দুর পরিবারই সমগ্র বিশ্বের প্রতিকৃতিস্থরূপ। দণ্ডনয়ার সকল পদার্থই ভারতীয় পারিবারিক জীবনে স্থান পায়” (সরকার, ১৩২৮, ইংরাজের জন্মভূমি : ৪৬০)। “But, for the Hindus, family is the epitome of the entire world (or cosmos). Every item of life on earth finds room in the daily routine of the Indian family” (Sarkar, 1922 : 460) The Hindus regard the activities like helping the poor and distressed, maintaining the unemployed and infirm relatives, tending the cattle and regularly cleansing the cow-shed attached to the household, performing the rite of hospitality to a visitor or guest or pilgrim as the task or obligation of family and do not divide them into functions to be performed by different and specialised agencies. “‘পঞ্চমহাযজ্ঞ’ ইহাদের গৃহস্থানীর মামুলী অনুষ্ঠান।” (তদেব) “The performance of ‘pancamahayajna’ or ‘Five Sacrifices’ [“Teaching (and studying) is the sacrifice (offered) to Brahman, the (offerings of water and food called) Tarpana the sacrifice to the manes, the burnt oblation the sacrifice offered to the gods, the Bali offering that offered to the Bhutas, and the hospitable reception of guests the offering to men”—Manu. III, 69 ; Bühler’s translation, Bühler, 1886 : 87-88] is a usual practice with a Hindu household” (*idem* ; parenthesis added).

It is interesting that Manu remarks, “But he who does not feed these five, the gods, his guests, those whom he is bound to maintain, the manes, and himself, lives not, though he breathes” (III, 71 ; Bühler, op. cit. : 89). Explaining the cosmic symbiosis underlying the Five Sacrifices Radhakamal Mukerjee writes, ‘The Indian myth of Five Obligations and Sacrifices (panchamahayajna) is a generative master notion in morality and culture, and makes work a sacrament for everybody.....These five obligations, according to the familiar myth charged with cosmic meanings are : obligation to gods, to ancestors, to spiritual teachers, to fellowmen and to animals with all of whom men live interlocked lives. A chain of reciprocal duties and services binds together all creatures in the cosmos. This is the basic concept for the moral order.

It is imperative that such debts are to be repaid by every person through the performance of five obligatory sacrifices (yajna). These sacrifices are : sacrifices to the gods or worship, sacrifices to the spiritual teachers, i.e., cultivation and advancement of learning, sacrifices to ancestors, i. e., procreation and upbringing of the family and transmission of faith and culture, sacrifices to fellowmen, i.e., love, sharing and service, and finally, sacrifices to birds and animals, i.e., love, care and devotion to the welfare of all sentient creatures. Man's daily round of activities[thus] gains in full symbolic meaning and significance.....A man of no sacrifice upsets the cosmic symbiosis of nature, earth, man, culture and Deity, and is a thief, since he enjoys the gifts of the cosmos without offering anything in return" (Mukerjee, 1951 : 6-7).

Nobody else than a couple and its unmarried sons and daughters finds room in the nuclear family of Great Britain or other western countries. As a result, associations of various types become necessary for looking after the helpless or infirm relatives, or distantly related widows or children who have lost their parents. The joint family of the Hindus provides succour to all these members of the family. While the ladies of a Hindu or Indian family perform the sacred task of serving others within the precincts of the household, their counterparts in the west join or organise or help specialised associations like Nursing Homes, Alms Houses, Work Houses, etc., for realising their desire to help or serve others.

The task also of cooking food has gradually been transferred from family to outside specialised agencies in the west. This is the result of an extreme division of labour and differentiation of functions in the west, which has not been looked upon with favour by the Hindus. Finally, every household in India has an open courtyard attached to it, which gives it plenty of light and open air that ensures health and hygiene of the members of the household against disease and sickness. But, the west has developed specialised institutions like municipalities which create and maintain open

spaces, public parks, gardens, etc., for providing the urban people with the much desired air and light. If anybody looks into the socio-cultural phenomena in India and Great Britain, or the west in general, he will find that in the west nearly two dozen associations, each independent and self-sufficient, have emerged in place of the family in order to perform a number of specific tasks which were earlier performed in and by the family. In India many of these functions used to be and are even today performed within the confines of the family. Sarkar wonders, “ମାନୁଷୀବିନ ହିନ୍ଦୁର ବିଧାନେଇ ବୈଚିତ୍ରୟମ୍ଭ ଏବଂ କ୍ରେବସ୍‌ପୂଣ୍ଣ ନହେ କି ?” (ସବକାର, ୧୩୨୪ : ୪୬୨)। “Does not human life evince wider variety and greater richness in quality in the Hindu socio-cultural order than in other orders ?” (Sarkar, 1922b : 462).

Sarkar's sketch of the Hindu or Indian family in contradistinction to the British (western) family ends here. He never returned to study the nature of family in India. Nor did he examine the extent of the possibility of continuance of the special character of the Hindu/Indian family in the changed milieu of an industrialising or industrialised society, the society which India of his imagination aimed at. What is, however, noteworthy is that Sarkar's characterisation of the Indian family seems to be confirmed in the studies by the sociologists of recent times.

J. P. Desai wrote, for example, that “The concept of family as the nuclear family is still not the Indian concept. Consequently, the nuclear family to the Indian is not the same as it is to the Englishman or American today” (1964 : 32). He started nevertheless his famous survey of the family in Mahuva town with the following idea. “If the actions are oriented towards the husband, wife and children group it should be understood as a nuclear family. If they are oriented towards a group wider than that it should be a joint family” (*idem*). He found, however, at the end of his survey that “The belief in the desirability of joint living was found to be quite widespread. Even when there is no jointness of property or

jointness of residence, it is maintained by the recognition of kinship obligations" (*ibid.* : 147).

The conclusions of Irawati Karve were no different either. She would not accept and use the term 'nuclear' in analysing the nature of families in India. She would categorize them into 'joint' and 'non-joint,' "The conjugal family has," wrote Karve, "come into 'fashion' through imitation rather than through any structural necessity of the society. If Parsons and with him others think that in India modern industrialization is leading to a gradual decline of the joint-family, it is a hypothesis not yet substantiated" (Karve, 1968 : 392). She concluded from her survey that in a large number of cases "jointness and non-jointness" were temporal phases of a family.

In the conclusion or what he calls "observations" of his survey of West Bengal Family Structure Ramkrishna Mukherjee remarks that "with respect to the familial organization of Indian society, the patrilineal-patririvirilocal joint family is seen to be the desired norm [among the Hindus] since the ancient timesThe Moslem ethic also does not strike a different tune. And yet, the humbler sections of the society are often found in the same literatures to live in nuclear families as against the wealthier ones.....However, the kinship bond among all these sections of the society is not reported to be different ; the desire to attain large families of procreation and orientation is considered to be fairly universal" (1977a : 178). Mukherjee urges a content analysis of all the relevant literature for a further confirmation of the above picture of the desire of the Indians for joint families. "For contemporary West Bengal, however, a similar picture emerges from his survey. Though the survey showed that 54% of the families in West Bengal in 1960-61 were nuclear, a consideration of the variables concomitant to the formation, propagation and destruction of family-units reveals that "the patrilineal-patririvirilocal joint families of procreation of the heads of West Bengal families is the central tendency in the society, as it is likely for the Indian society as a whole also" (*ibid.* : 177).

Mukherjee refuses to treat this phenomenon as a manifestation of the essential nature of "one of Asian 'inert societies'" or as something that is "traditionally irrational" (*ibid.* : 182). He hypothesizes, instead, that this social fact is a rational response of the people in an economy of scarcity which compels them to fall back upon their families of procreation in their old age in view of the absence of any savings or a social insurance system.

Milton Singer seems to support Karve's thesis when he writes that he finds from his own study of the industrialists of Madras city that joint family has helped rather than hindered them in their industrial and business management (Singer, 1972 : 286—298). Thus, Sarkar's focus on the cultural and structural specificity of the Hindu or Indian family might, if pursued patiently and in greater detail, lead to new lines of inquiry regarding the congruence or incompatibility of "structural types" of the families with industrial transformation and economic development of a society.

In comparison with his statement regarding the family, Sarkar's discussion of caste is fairly elaborate. Sarkar referred to this phenomenon again and again in all major works by him (1916 : 192-205, 1936 : 71-73, 108-111; 1937 : 34-35, 126-135; 1937a : 101-108, 191-196, 1941 : 168-174, 242-247, 638-639). A separate monograph, at least, a separate, fairly long chapter, is necessary for an analysis of his views on caste. The readers may discover contradictions in his statements made at different places. Also, Sarkar's proneness to find parallels of the Indian caste system in other cultures is evident in many places. *Ingrajer Janmabhumi* bears, however, evidence of Sarkar's efforts towards understanding the specificity of the caste system and the processes as to how it has been adapting itself to the changing circumstances.

In his discussion with George Unwin of the University of Manchester Sarkar refuted the idea that castes were frozen collectivities totally independent of one another and there was rigid compartmentalization of them in terms of values, ideas and interests, that stood in the way of the political unity

of India. He pointed out that on paper a caste is described as an autonomous and independent community. But, in reality, the degree of rigidity of the division between one caste and another was never that complete. The form assumed by the caste system during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when India became subjugated by the British did not characterise its history all through. Before India's subjugation by foreign powers the dynasties and the political boundaries of the kingdoms or states constantly changed. The cultural, economic and political environments of castes too changed as a result. Caste-boundaries were redrawn again and again. Castes, could not, therefore, remain unchanging and immobile. Intercaste mobility and other forms of interaction between one caste group and another were but natural. Castes were then living entities ready to adapt themselves to the new forces and influences and enrich themselves with their help. But it was the culture of political independence which made it possible. When the country came to be dominated by a foreign power, the milieu of free, independent thought and action disappeared and castes too lost their original vitality and dynamism that made room for new ideas and groups of people. They were turned into rigid compartments.

It is true that the caste system divided the Hindu society into several compartments, though originally these were not water-tight compartments. These divisions were not small. Mobility becomes restricted in small spaces. But each major caste in India is fairly populous. As a result, it gives to its members a wide scope for selection of partners in marriage and interchange of ideas. Both upward and downward mobility of individuals and groups and exchange of men and ideas have been possible within a major caste group. Thus each caste group has found elements of change and new vigour from within. They have supplied strength to the adaptability of a caste to exogenous changes, to new ideas, groups and interests. The caste system has thus been saved from degenerating into a moribund system.

Contact and conflict with the Western culture, political subjection, railways and communication system, and social reform in the nineteenth century created a new constellation of forces for the Hindu society and its caste system. Though Sarkar confessed his inability to exactly predict the nature of the impact of it on the caste system, he indicated a few trends.

First, the sanskara or prejudice behind untouchability would weaken more and more and would, in all probability, disappear after the twentieth century. Secondly, occupations would gradually cease to be hereditary and caste-based. The basis of eligibility for getting a job would be skill or merit achieved by an individual and not his/her caste. But, the rules of marriage would not change radically. The Indians would not feel enthusiastic regarding intercaste marriage. The experience of marriages in the Western world with more liberal rules of marriage and the apparent support for the Indian (Hindu) marriage system from new Eugenics, theories of heredity or anthropology might act as a damper on the desire for total regulation of the restrictions on intercaste marriage.

There would, however, be a reversal of the trend of fission of caste groups. The numerous endogamous divisions within a caste, the large number of sub-castes (খণ্ড—বণ্ড) or sub-sub-castes (উপখণ্ড— উপবণ্ড), created out of a caste, would tend to fuse to create a few broad divisions within each of (or even among) which social interaction and exchange would begin. It would fairly extend the sphere of social activities including that of freedom in the selection of brides and grooms in marriages.

‘চতুর্থ’তঃ, ভারতবাসীর জাতীয় আদশ⁴ কখনও সামাজিক জাতিপ্রধা অনুসারে খণ্ডশং বিভক্ত ছিল না। ত্রাঙ্গণ, ক্ষত্রিয়, বৈশ্য, শূন্য সকলেই একরূপ চিন্তা করিত এবং এক আদশে⁴ জীবন গঠন করিত। ইহারা পরম্পরারের শব্দ বা বিরোধী কোন্দিনই ছিল না। সংস্কৃত সাহিত্যের প্রচার, ধর্ম শিক্ষার বিস্তার, পুরোহিতদিগের সংশ্বব এবং তৌর গমন, মেলা, উৎসব, শোভাযাত্রা ও লোকসাহিত্যের প্রভাব—এই সকলের দ্বারা দেশে কালোপর্ণগাঁ

ଏକ ପ୍ରତିତ ହେତ ।” (ସରକାର, ୧୩୨୮ : ୮୦୭-୮୦୮) । “Fourthly, the social divisions of caste never fragmented the national life and ideals of India into separate parts. Brahmins, kshatriyas, vaisyas and sudras—all of them shared the same ideas and values and lived their life according to the same ideals. They were never opposed to or the enemies of one another. The extension of Sanskrit literature, the spread of religious education and ideas, the association with and influence of priests and pilgrimages, fairs and festivals, ceremonies and processions, the impact of folk-literature, etc., effected within the country and society bonds of unity, in tune with the particular ages in history ” (୧୯୨୨୧ : ୪୦୭-୪୦୮) । As a result, the country did experience in earlier times, i.e., in mediaeval ages that kind of harmony and racial or national unity (ଏକ ଜାତୀୟତା) which was relevant to those periods. The modern times witness the growth and strengthening of this very sense or feeling of national unity in new forms through the development of vernaculars and their literature, and the weakening and gradual disappearance of caste restrictions regarding occupations.

“ପଞ୍ଚମତଃ, ଏଇମଙ୍କଳ କାରଣେ ଜାଗିବେଦକେ ରାଷ୍ଟ୍ରୀୟ ଉତ୍ସତର ଦ୍ୱାରା ବିଶେଷନା କରାର ପ୍ରସ୍ତରଜନ ନାହିଁ । ସମଜୋପଧ୍ୟୋଗୀ ସଂସକାର ହଟ୍ଟୀଆ ଚାଲିଥାଏଛି ” (ଓଦେ : ୮୦୮) । “Fifthly, one need not, in presence of the facts above, consider the caste system to be an obstacle to the development and progress of the Indian nation. It has all through been experiencing necessary transformation from one age to another ” (ibid : ୪୦୮).

Clearly, Sarkar here was talking of the modernity of the Indian (Hindu) tradition. India's backwardness in the sphere of material achievements has been blamed again and again on the caste system, the alleged rigidity of which blocked the mobility of individuals and groups from one occupation to another, from one social stratum to a different social stratum. According to Sarkar's (re) interpretation of the Hindu tradition, the oft-repeated caste restrictions were but “legal fiction” or “pious wish” which was positively

broken by ‘the *Real-politik* of race mixture and inter-caste marriage, i.e., varnasamkara’. The inter-mixture of castes or races implied a “veritable democratization of Indian society and culture. The *Vrātya* and the *varna-samkara* were some of the ‘folk-elements’ which served to enrich and strengthen the foundations of Hindu civilization” (1937 : 132).

VTSP which repeats some of Sarkar’s observations on caste recorded above mentions two basic aspects of the “Caste Gestalt”. “In French terminology these are (1) *le table* (the table, i.e., dining) and (2) *le lit* (the bed, i.e., marriage). The caste groups are first dining groups, and, secondly, marriage groups” (Sarkar, 1941 : 18). The first feature “is purely social, the second physiologico-biological” (*idem*). Both of them are based on the theory of the Hindu law givers like Manu, Yagnavalkya, Hemadri, Chandeswara, Raghunandana that caste groups are hereditarily in nature “This is evidently a somatic, physiognomic, ethnic or flesh and blood principle in groupification. The object is to prevent the *had mash* (bones and muscles) of the groups from getting mixed up with one another” (*idem*). The third concomitant feature of the caste system is that each caste has its own, specific function or occupation. In practice also the principle of “another caste, another occupation” was realized in the past. “although not as rigidly as one imagines ..” (*ibid.* 168-169; emphasis added).

Discrimination on the basis of caste appeared to Sarkar, a liberal thinker of the twentieth century, invidious. “The ‘communal award’ of Manu, Yagnavalkya, Raghunandana and others had”, Sarkar wrote in SP, “sanctioned the disenfranchisement of the teeming millions of the population. The culture-bearing stocks and strains of the hydra-headed multitude were generally overlooked by those law-givers” (1936 : 109-110). In VTSP, however, Sarkar offered a somewhat different interpretation of the phenomenon. “Using a contemporary term”, Sarkar put in his inimitable style,

"the caste-pattern may, generally speaking, be described as a system of 'communal award'. Each community or group is awarded certain privileges and restrictions in this system, which is usually known as that of varnashrama (castes and stages). It implies that every individual, first, belongs to a caste-group and, secondly, performs the duties or 'functions' of the different-stages, i.e., age-periods assigned by law" (1941 : 169).

In C. I. also, as it has been recorded in the preceding pages, Sarkar presented a well argued defence of *Varnasrama*. "If...the people is to constitute a state, every member of each of the *varnas* must have to observe the *Ordnung*, system or discipline, i.e., perform the duties (*sva-dharma*) of his 'station' at each of the four *ásramas* or periods of life. Thus, the soldier at the front must 'do or die', the young man while at school must not marry, the king must keep to the coronation oath, and so forth" (1937 : 274).

Thus interpreted, the Hindu caste system, rather, varnashrama, might have been functional for the Hindus so far as the maintenance of social order was concerned. But did it not result in a more or less stationary society? Sarkar would give a negative reply to this question. And the reasons were as follows.

First, in the same SP as contained his criticism of the Hindu law-givers for incapacitating the lowly castes, Sarkar furnished a new interpretation of the intention of the Hindu law-givers upholding the caste-system. Their emphasis on the hereditary basis of caste was, Sarkar averred, not absolute. "The Brahmanocracy of old, as established by Manu and his predecessors and successors, was based on twofold foundations. *Janma* or birth was only one of the foundations of that social polity. The other foundation was *samskara*, 'initiation', education, nurture, etc. It is erroneous to ascribe a birth-monism to Manu and his peers, coming as they did down from the sociologists of the *Aitareya Brahmana*. The theory of that social philosophy and societal orga-

ization was essentially right. That theory has worked well ... in India... Today also that philosophy and that organization are pragmatically found to be working well on the whole. Only, Manu requires to be modified and expanded. The facts of history have gone on modifying and expanding Manu through the ages, often unconsciously, of course." (1936 : 110-11).

Lest he was accused of "inventing" this tradition, Sarkar tried to show its actual location in the Sanskrit texts from the Arthashastra down to the Sukraniti. He deplored the propaganda of the western scholars that the Hindus were weak as a nation of fighters because of their caste system. Since the Hindus allegedly, received "the entire war-work for the kshatriya caste" in consonance with the rigid principle of division of labour among the castes, they failed to utilize the total man-power of the country for its defence at the moments of crisis. Proofs counter to this fallacious presupposition and argument were, Sarkar sought to argue, to be found not only in the facts of history but in Sastrik injunctions regarding the profession of arms by different caste groups including the Brahmanas to meet the exigencies. The Arthashastra provides the following evidence. "My teacher says that of the armies composed of Brahmanas, Kshattriyas, Vaisyas, or Sudras, that which is mentioned first is, on account of bravery, better to be enlisted than the subsequently mentioned in the order of enumeration. No, says, Kautilya, the enemy may win over to himself the army of Brahmanas by means of prostration. Hence, the army of Kshattriyas trained in the art of wielding weapons is better, or the army of Vaisyas or Sudras having greater numerical strength (is better)" (Kautilya, IX, ii; Shamastry, 1915 : 417-18 ; cited in Sarkar, 1937 : 35). Further evidence of "the general Bushido Morality of the Hindus" (Sarkar, 1937 : 35) was supplied by the following remark from the *Sukraniti* : "Even Brāhmaṇas should fight if there have been aggressions on women or if there has been a killing of cows (held inviolable according to Hindu religion)

by the enemy. The life of even the Brahmana who fights when attacked is praised by the people" (*idem*). The categories of men can, according to the *Sukraniti*, go "beyond the solar spheres, i.e., into heaven, the austere missionary and the man who is killed at the front in a fight" (*ibid* : 36). The *Sukraniti* mentioned also the fact of inter-caste marriage, both *anuloma* and *pratiloma* (IV, iii, 22-23 ; cited in Sarkar, 1921 : 89). It spoke of the "interchangeability" of *sva-dharma* (functions) among the members of the three twice-born categories (Sarkar, 1921 : 93-95). Provisions like these in different *dharma* and *niti* treatises reflect the essential dynamism and adaptability of the castes or the social order of the Hindus to the ever-changing conditions or situations (*ibid.* : 95).

Having cited illustrations of the lawgivers' knowledge and/or approval of mobility among the castes in the Sanskrit texts, Sarkar searched, in the second place, the examples of the same in the history of Indian society. According to him, martial prowess was the most effective means of upward mobility for the members of the lower castes. The rank of the kshatriyas provided a berth to the members of any caste, if they or their caste group as a whole could marshall the necessary strength. Sarkar was thus talking of kshatriyization as a perennial process in Indian history generating mobility within the caste order (cf. Damle, 1968 ; Sinha, 1962, 1987) and not so much of Sanskritization as Gupta (1988) believes. "Even so late as the seventeenth century Sivaji the Great..... electrified the non-kshatriya low-class Mawalis into the 'Maratha peril' of the Great Moghul" (1937 : 34). Three important forces were discerned by Sarkar to have facilitated the rise of new castes and the change of old castes. First, it would be historically incorrect to assume a rigid association between castes and occupations. Castes were not the "gilds" as developed in medieval India and Europe. "Sociologically, one is not entitled to believe that economic considerations constitute the exclusive forces in the formation of castes" (1941 : 170). Social metabolism in the form of structural change of groups, i.e., their horizontal movements

from one occupation to another or vertical trends up and down has been effected by "innumerable political or dynastic revolutions" through the epochs of Indian history. Secondly, the profession of arms which assures the survival of the most competent proved itself powerful enough "to generate even without economic considerations these caste or race mobilities of all forms" (*ibid.* : 170-171). Finally, law-making as "the function of the state" is another powerful agency in the transformation of social orders. It is law that "made or unmade 'castes'" in the past and "has been partially making and unmaking them" in modern times also. Sarkar thus highlighted the political aspect of caste. The granting of as well as the derecognising of the caste status has always been a potent weapon in the hands of the powers that be to reward the obedient and obliging and to punish the recalcitrant and to maintain their hegemony. Sarkar's approach has been followed by a few social scientists after him, though it still awaits a fuller treatment. A. Mitra opened, for example, his account of the tribes and castes of West Bengal (ir. 1951 Census) with an excerpt from Edmund Burke's speech in the trial of Warren Hastings 3rd Day, the 15th February, 1788. Burke exposed there how Warren Hastings usurped "the seat of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, which was to decide upon the castes of all those people" of Bengal whom he ruled over and how he silenced and thwarted, through Kanto Babu and Ganga Govinda Singh, his two trusted native lieutenants, all criticism or opposition from the articulate and powerful natives of Bengal by threatening them with degradation of their caste status (Mitra, 1951). Caste-groups, therefore, had not been as immutable as the western thinkers (including the sociologists like Max Weber) painted them to be.

Sarkar anticipated the idea of Sanskritization also. As a pioneer in the sociology of population in this country, Sarkar noticed in the data of 1931 *Census of India* (vol. V. *Bengal and Sikkim*, part I [1933], pp. 441, 444, 448, 454, 480-484) that in the previous four decades the Kayasthas

had numerically been just below the Brahmins. But in forty years the population of the Brahmins rose by 14 per cent whereas that of the Kayasthas increased by 58 per cent and the Kayasthas outnumbered, as a result, the Brahmins. How should one account for this phenomenal rise in Kayasta population ? The idea of "relative fecundity" or "natural increment", i. e., surplus of births over deaths as embodied in "differential fertility" would not provide an adequate explanation of the phenomenon. "A great deal is to be accounted for by invasions from other castes whose upward trends have been manifest for some long time. The non-Kayasta, perhaps one of the 'depressed' of yesterday, has grown into the high caste of today.From the 'aboriginal' to the 'high caste' Hindu the gap may be great, but the bridges are sure, although slow, and quite solid. Social 'stratification' is not rigid, as Ammon believes" (Sarkar, 1936 : 72 . cf. Bose, 1953 &1975).

The rise of the lower castes or races, as borne out in social metabolism of India, should not at all be treated as regress or qualitative decline of the population, or uneugenic or anti-eugenic or dysgenic. "Historically speaking, the Brahmanocracy, i. e., the class responsible for the creation of Hindu culture, has virtually always been the result of somatic inter-mixture with non-Brahmans, non-'Hindus', non-Indians or extra-Indians and other alleged lower castes and tribes or races. The ascendancy in modern or contemporary times of certain castes and races which are conventionally known to belong to the lower orders is but continuing the millennium-long tradition of Indian culture-history, namely, miscegenation, blood-fusion, race-mixture, Hinduization of the non-Hindu, Indianization of the extra-Indian and so forth" (ibid. [i.e., S.P.] : 73).

Changes within the caste-system were in this way recurrent in Indian history, though the caste-system itself did not disappear. Sarkar gave a brief but interesting analysis of the how and why of it.

Belief in the purity of blood and punctilious observance

of the purity of *acharas* or rites perpetuated the caste system. But intermittent changes in both these aspects had been a fact of the history of castes. The "blood of the persons belonging to each caste changed from generation to generation" and from one region to another because of the intermixture of individuals of different strains. "The hybridized individuals continued to call themselves as well as have themselves described by the old caste name" (1941 : 171). Secondly, in regard to the *mores* or social manners and customs also, each caste assimilated new items from time to time. "Acculturation to new institutions and ideologies was going on all the time, and yet the persons acculturated to the new *acharas* preserved their old caste designations. Both in physical blood as well as in social manners the contents of each caste disappeared or got modified and underwent perpetual transformation. *But the caste as a covering title retained its formal identity or nominal immortality during all these changes in substance*" (*idem* , emphasis added).

What transpires from above is the fact of continuity and change and change and continuity of the caste system or the Indian society as a whole (cf. Mandelbaum, 1972). Though the preceding analysis points out the resilience of the caste system as well as the incessant changes within it, the logical foundation of it becomes imperilled when Sarkar is found to have prefaced his discussion of the mixture of blood and modification of rites of various caste groups with the comment that "emancipation from caste tradition is nothing new in India" (*idem*). Does the continuation of the caste system prove that the Indians or Hindus have become "emancipated" from caste tradition ? Or is it true that the caste system underwent a total transubstantiation while its continuity was only in form ? If one considers the time when Sarkar presented his analysis of the caste system, one must appreciate the originality and insight of Sarkar. The way in which he highlighted the specific nature of the caste system as evinced in its dual capacity to adapt itself to continuous changes and at the same time to maintain itself was novel in Indian

sociology at that time. Sarkar sensitized his audience to the problems of a fuller sociological explanation of the phenomenon of caste. "The caste transformations of India, both racial and social remain," remarked Sarkar, "yet to be adequately investigated" (*idem*). But in his haste to demonstrate the flexibility of the Hindus and their institutions and the similarity between the system of stratification in the Hindu society and those in other parts of the world, he himself abandoned the exploration of the nature of the caste system, its peculiarities and the sociological problems created by them.

Specificity and commonality provide the warp and woof of human culture and society in all places and times. Sociology's special problems emanate from that it has to account for both in its investigation into any socio-cultural phenomenon or entity. It would become jejune and sterile, if it ignores either. This chapter rather this book furnishes ample evidence that Sarkar was aware of this truth. Though the historical compulsions of his time made him emphasize more the uniformity of the Indian society and culture with the occidental socio-cultural system, he was alive to the former's uniqueness. Sarkar intuited the specificity of the Indian culture (or one may say, of the Asian culture) though he did not spell it out clearly enough either for himself or for others.

Sarkar's intuitive appreciation of the specificity of Asian culture is evident in the following observation about his experience in Japan.

"ইংল্যন্ডে ও আমেরিকায় লোক-জনের ভাষা ব্ৰহ্মতাম—তাহাদেৱ সঙ্গে তাহাদেৱ মাতৃভাষায় কথা বলিতে পাৰিতাম ; তথাপি ঐ সকল সমাজে নিজেকে খাপছাড়া বোধ কৰিবাছি—উহারাও আমাকে যেন তাহাদেৱ নিজেৰ কৰিবা লইতে পাৰে নাই । জাপানী নৱনারীৰ ভাষা ব্ৰহ্ম নাই—সৰ্বত্র বোবাৰ মত চলাফেৱা কৰিবাছি ; অথচ যে কোন সহৱে বা পল্লীৰ যে কোন রাষ্ট্ৰায় দাঁড়াইৱা, কঠিকাতাৰ দৃশ্যই দৰ্শিতোছি, মনে হইয়াছে । ট্ৰামে, রেলে গাড়ীভৱা লোক দৰ্শিয়া, অনাদীয়, অপৰিচিত, অজ্ঞাতকুলশৈলেৱ

সংস্কৰ বুঝি নাই। ইহাদের হাটুনি-চ'হনি, ইহাদের দাঁড়াইবার ভঙ্গী, বথা
বলিবার ভঙ্গী, ইহাদের হাসিঠাট্টা, সমস্তম সলজ্জ ভাব, ইহাদের অভিবাদন-
প্রধা এবং অতিথি-সেবা—সকল বিষয়েই ভারতবৰ্ষ'কে পাইয়াছি। এই
সম্মুখে ইয়োৱামেরিকার গুণ্ড-মাত্র নাই। পাশ্চাত্যেরা জাপানী-ভাষা দ্রুতে
না—আমও বুঝি না; কিন্তু আমি জাপানে নিজের ঘৰ পাইয়াছি।
পাশ্চাত্যেরা এখানে ‘দ্যেপল’, ‘ফিল্টি’ বা ‘রোমান্স’ মাত্র অৰ্দ্ধ এন্ট্ৰি
ৱহসাময় একটা কিছু দৰ্শিয়া যায়। জাপান প্রাণে-প্রাণে এশিয়াৰ অন্যগ'ত
—কতকগুলি লোহা-লকড় মাত্র ইষোবামেরিকা হইতে আমদানী ক'ৱৰ্য'ছ।
বিদেশীয় অনুষ্ঠানগুলি কি পৰিমাণে এবং কিভাবে সবদেশীয় অনুষ্ঠানের
অঙ্গীভূত কৱিয়া লইতে হৰ, জাপানে আমিলে তাহা বেশ বুঝিঃ পাবা
যায়। “...ইয়োৱামেরিকার অনুষ্ঠান-প্রতিষ্ঠানসমূহ গ্ৰহণ কৰিতে যাইয়া
জাপান অবিকল নকল ক'ব নাই।” (সবকাৰ, ১৩৩০, নৰ্বীন এশিয়াৰ
জন্মদান্ত জাপান ? ৩৯৮-৩৯৯) “During my stay in England
and America I could follow the language of the people
there—I could fluently converse with them in their mother-
tongue ; yet I felt somewhat out of place in the societies of
those countries—those people too, it appeared, could not
accept me as one of their own communities. I could not
understand Japanese, I used to move everywhere amidst the
Japanese men and women almost like a dumb man ; nevertheless
it appeared that I was observing in Japan the scenes of life
in Calcutta, whether I was in a city or in a suburban area. On
board the crowded tr. or railway compartments never did
I have the feeling that I was travelling with strangers. The
gestures and postures of the Japanese, their gait and demean-
our, their jokes and pleasanties, their deferential and modest
approach, their ways of exchanging greetings, their hospitality
to guests—all made me feel the very presence of India.
There was no sign of Euro-America's influence on any one of
these aspects of Japanese life. Western people do not understand
Japanese, nor do I ; but I found my second home in
Japan. Western visitors to Japan leave the country with a
vague sense of a certain kind of 'spell', 'mystery' or 'romance',
i. e., something that is incomprehensible or extremely inscruti-
able about the Japanese way of life. The heart of Japan

belongs to Asia—she has imported from Euro-America iron and wood only. Coming to Japan everybody well understands how and to what extent a culture can assimilate the elements of a foreign culture, can transform the ideas and institutions which it adopts from a foreign culture into its own cultural traits. While receiving the associations and institutions of Euro-America Japan has not indulged in unthinking imitation” (Sarkar, 1923 : 398-399). There is a wonderful resemblance between this finding of Sarkar and the following remark by Emile Durkheim : “Japan may borrow from us our arts, our industry and even our political organisation, but it will not cease to belong to a different social species from that of France and Germany” (Durkheim, 1982 : 118).

Thus an awareness of “Asianness” and (therefore, “Indianess”) was evident in Sarkar’s writings. The sway of the industrial-technological order of the west over the entire globe is an undeniable fact of modern times. But whether the non-western cultures will and should totally give in or hold out with a degree of distinctiveness is still an unsettled question. It is doubtful if the sway of western culture is that complete. It is also doubtful if human culture and civilisation as a whole will benefit through the kind of homogenization which the thesis of a unidirectional movement of societies towards the “triumphant” western culture implies. The experience of Japan may give some useful guidelines. Japan began industrializing herself much later than the west. She borrowed the machines and technical know-how from the west. But in comparison with Japan, the U. S. A. in recent years has not shown its industrial dynamism. One of the explanations of the fact is that in the American or Western civilisation the individual is given the utmost importance and the values and norms of the society uphold the rights of the individual but, in Japan, the individual is to a degree subordinated to the society. It has an impact on industry. The Japanese industrial corporations work like big communities (cf. Abegglen, 1959). Once a person joins a corporation, he

spends the rest of his working life serving that corporation. A strong sense of corporate solidarity binds the workers and the managers into a well-knit, efficient, productive unit. But the fierce individualism of the American society protects those who leave the corporation rather than those who remain with it. As a result, investment in research and development, particularly in the areas of advanced technology, proves to be a highly risky proposition. The workers developing a new product or design or process in a corporation may gain valuable experience and may learn new ways of doing a job. But other corporations may give lucrative offers to these workers who may then decide to leave the corporation where they gained the skill and/or technological know-how. The investment by the first corporation becomes thus unproductive. The ways of Euro-America are not, therefore, worth emulating in each and every case.

Sarkar's sensitiveness to this truth led him to a sociologically legitimate search of the distinctiveness of the Indian society and Indian culture. And, as the preceding discussion amply illustrates, his search yielded rich dividends. But he was a member of an enslaved nationality. He was, therefore, driven in the later part of his life by a dream which proved to be more powerful than his endeavour towards the understanding of the "Indianness". The dream was that the baton of world leadership that passed westward across the Atlantic in the nineteenth or early twentieth century could move back eastward a hundred years later. The dream made him collect evidence that the Indians (and other Asians) had the intellectual prowess and physical and mental strength to face the challenge of the industrially and technologically advanced west. This prowess and strength was derived from their socio-cultural set-up which was similar (Sarkar would say, strikingly similar) with that in the western part of the globe. As a result, the original search for Indianness was relegated to the background in the writings of Sarkar in his later life.

CHAPTER VII

IN LIEU OF A CONCLUSION

Sarkar made deeper and more extensive searches into the nature of culture and society of India than what has been indicated in the foregoing pages. And, another tome is necessary to examine the findings of the said researches. In the meantime, the readers would definitely appreciate the role of Sarkar as a pioneer in Indian sociology, albeit his faltering steps at places and the consequent inconsistencies and incongruities in his inferences and tentative conclusions.

Sarkar was a pioneer in Indian sociology since he explored more than some other peers of his time the possibility of applying the concepts and theories of *sociologists* of the west in the analysis of the socio-cultural system of India as it had been and as it would or should have been. It becomes clear when one compares Sarkar with G. S. Ghurye, another founding father of Indian sociology. Both of them believed that "the Vedic past is not dead and gone but that it lives in the present and is likely to continue to live in the near future" (Ghurye, 1979 : v ; cf. Sarkar, 1937). Both of them continuously worked at connecting the "Tradition with the Contemporary in the study of Indian society" (Panchanadikar cited in Ghurye, 1973 : 196 ; cf. Sarkar, 1914, 1922 & 1937). And both of them were concerned with "(1) Religious Consciousness ; (2) Conscience ; (3) Justice. (4) Free Pursuit of Knowledge and Free Expression : and (5) Toleration" as the "central facts, or the foundations of culture" (Ghurye, 1965 : vi ; also Ghurye, 1962, 1964, 1965a, 1974 ; cf. Sarkar, 1922, 1937, 1937a). But these two indologist-cum-sociologists or sociologist-cum-indologists had many differences too. And, one of the chief differences lay in Ghurye's virtual silence on the concepts and ideas of sociologists like Durkheim, Weber, Toennies, etc., and Sarkar's brief but critical analyses of

them. While Ghurye had his training at the hands of social anthropologists like Rivers or Haddon and shunned the company of sociologists like Hobhouse (Ghurye, 1973 : 43-45), Sarkar did not have any formal training from the foreign scholars in either sociology or social anthropology and perused in his own way the works of the sociologists leaving a little aside the ideas he received from the anthropologists like Haddon or Marret or Lowie or Goldenwieser. A pupil of Ghurye informs us that the students of Ghurye in the mid-thirties did not have to read Durkheim or Weber or the works of the American sociologists and the course of reading included works mainly on anthropology and by the British scholars (Desai, 1981 : 19-20, 30, 45). Though no comparable account of what was taught by Sarkar in the University of Calcutta is yet available, Sarkar's writings since 1936 evince his familiarity with the ideas of a host of sociologists—American, British and continental. Sarkar like the other pioneers in Indian sociology was interested in art and painting, literature and sculpture, religion and polity and economy of India of the past as well as of his own times and composed treatises on these aspects with a futuristic outlook. But he showed his ingenuity in examining the efficacy and also the ideological implications of the ideas of Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, Weber, Toennies or Marx or Pareto in relation to the study of social structure and culture of India or human society and culture in general. That Sarkar could not settle for any particular school, theory or model may be explained by several factors. First, he did not have patience with the perusal of the ideas of any particular sociologist or school. Secondly, he took a grand view of sociology. He believed like some of his contemporaries particularly like Radhakamal Mukerjee and D. P. Mukerji of the Lucknow school that sociology is "an $(n+1)$ th science taking not a fragmented but a synthetic view of societal developments and processes" (Joshi, 1986 : 1456 ; cf. DP's view, "the sociologist ... is the ' $n+1$ 'th scientist" in Mukerji, 1948 : vii, 1932 : xv). It resulted, thirdly, in pluralism in his

thought. While the lack of consistent and systematic pursuit by him of sociological concepts and theories and methods is lamentable, his efforts at making his audience familiar with these concepts, theories and approaches during the days of infancy of sociology in India can hardly be overappreciated.

II

A seat of honour will ever be reserved for Sarkar in Indian sociology for his focussing on what Oommen calls "the pluralist paradigm in Indian thought and the reconciliatory ethos in Indian praxis" (Oommen, 1983 : 130). In this aspect Sarkar was a 'Representative Man' in the Emersonian sense. Radhakamal Mukerjee only reaffirmed Sarkar's message conveyed in *Futurism of Young Asia* or *Creative India* when he wrote that "the great task of social reconstruction in the East is to renew and adapt the old and essential impulses and habits to the complex and enlarged needs of today" (Mukerjee as cited in Joshi, 1986 : 1460).

Though Sarkar hardly referred to or was hardly mentioned by D. P. Mukerji, he wrote volumes on what the latter described as "India's forces of conservation and powers of assimilation" (1958 : 76). Like his junior coprofessional Sarkar made a relentless attack on the mystification about Indian society and culture in the colonial ideologies and theories which legitimised the White Man's Burden and the Civilising Mission of Pax Britannica. DP's demolition of the false dichotomy of a "Static Orient and Dynamic Occident" was in a sense a repetition, though a creative reiteration, of what was one of the missions in Sarkar's life. Any reader of *Creative India* or other works by Sarkar would discover in the following lines by DP a perfect representation of the view dear to the soul of Sarkar : "...the nineteenth century renaissance is only one, and the last one, of a series of renaissances that India has enjoyed in the long course of her history. We know of at least five major periods of momentous changes bearing all the signs of new life : the Vedic-Aryan, the Buddhist, the Gupta, the Harsha and Vikramaditya, and

the Muslim, which included the glorious one of medieval saints and prophets of Bhakti cult...Each such period brought about an expansion of the human spirit and intelligence,...begot a new type of man,...curious to know and able to feel the whole gamut of experience, having a conception of the non-material tinged by the colours of the earth and an ambition for the earth uplifted by hopes of realising the ultra-mundane, here and now...[cf. Sarkar, PBHS 1914 : xi]. Every time Man...felt that he could master the elements, create gods and works of art in their image, dissent from traditions, frame new codes, discover self and soul, ride the course of events, plunge into action, fight, preach, trade and traffic, and yet keep the poise that was the token of his god-linked aristocracy...Humanism and enlightenment as such are well-known social phenomena in the history of India" (Mukerji, 1958 : 165 ; parenthesis added).

DP echoed the agony of Sarkar when he observed that "In practical affairs, the western attitude, up till 1948, was that Indians being a highly metaphysical and spiritual people should not be bothered with the conduct of such material things as were involved in mere existence, for which a western government was better fitted and ever willing. And the tragedy was that we almost accepted the West's valuation of ourselves and its own institutions" (ibid. : 177). Sarkar strove very hard to point out to the demoralised people of a subjugated country that its society had never remained moribund and its culture never debunked life on this earth and its flourishing in manifold directions. The significance and importance of his efforts become evident from the fact that even after three decades of independence a scholar in philosophy in India has to ask . was ancient Indian thought spiritualistic and other-worldly ? (Chandra, 1977 . 75-103). Even on the fortieth year of Indian independence, an Indian sociologist finds it necessary to write about "the householder, about his affirmation of a disciplined this-worldly life as the good life" (Madan, 1987 : 3), since much has been propagated "about the salience of *sannyasa*, or renunciation in Hindu

culture" (*ibid.* : 1). The cultural plight of the country when it was held in thraldom to a mighty colonial rule is anybody's guess. Sarkar's scathing attack on Max Müller was prompted by the urge for tearing off the veil of admiration for the spirituality of the Hindus—it was a veneer that concealed the real feelings of Max Müller regarding the Hindu religion and the attitude of the Hindus towards their gods and goddesses and also the actual intentions of the colonial masters and their academic and 'missionary' surrogates. Indeed, Max Müller observed in his lecture in the nave of Westminster Abbey on 3 December 1873 that "Brahmanism as a religion cannot stand the light of day.....How long this living death of national religion in India may last no one can tell" (cited in Martin, 1914 : 312). The emaciated subjects of the British colony in India lost the memory for a past when their ancestors and predecessors proved their mettle for success in diverse fields on this earth. The trauma had to be broken with a saga not of spiritual conquests but of military forays and this-worldly exploits of other kinds by the ancestors of these degraded weaklings. Sarkar's paean of praise for *virya* (valour), *sakti* (might or energy), *rajas* (the quality of passion or worldliness)—qualities which, according to him, existed in the culture and behaviour of the Hindus or Indians, folk and sophisticated, in ancient and even in mediaeval times—was composed for spurring his despairing countrymen into action along varied streams. Sarkar's sociological analysis of Indian life was essentially an exercise in "*sociologie des valeurs*" (Sarkar, 1936 : 120).

The founders of the Lucknow School of Sociology acquired, as Joshi informs us, "the stature of sages in the history of social science" in India not only by writing as social scientists and by teaching "but also by pursuing a way of life which was sage-like in every sense of the term" (Joshi, 1986 : 1456). They belonged to the heroic and the most creative age of Indian nationalism that aimed at arousing a sense of human dignity and a spirit of self-reliance in a people fastened to the colonial yoke and at wiping "the tear from every eye." And,

at least one of these founders, viz., Radhakamal Mukerjee, frankly admitted his "close association", during his early youth, with Benoy Kumar Sarkar, then a Professor at the Bengal National College : "Sarkar was a man of great sacrifice and idealism and his influence on the younger generation of his time.....was tremendous. We dreamed together many dreams of social education and rehabilitation and reorganization of the countryside for a mass awakening" (Mukerjee, 1955 : 6). Sarkar made, as it has been recorded earlier in this treatise, great sacrifices for the National Educational Movement. He chose mass awakening through national education as the avenue to serve his fatherland, or what a Bengali would call Matribhumi. He wrote, "Workers and organizers in the interest of India's regeneration will consider their sole religion to be the foundation of such temples of learning as help forward the development of manhood of her teeming millions, and choose to appreciate their highest self-realization in applying themselves whole-heartedly to the furtherance of this object. Idealists and self-sacrificing men will sincerely and earnestly flock to the field of education. The diffusion of man-making culture is, in fact, soon going to be an all-absorbing aim, the life's mission of some of our best men, and to be exalted in a new form of Sanyasa and penance in our social system. From among educators will come the Sanyasis and missionaries of Young India" (1913 ISE : 140 141). And, Sarkar himself was one of such best men turned into the Missionaries of Young India. His life's work including his ventures in sociology formed a continuous essay in self-sacrifice aiming at his country's regeneration. Not only did he actively associate himself with the National Educational Movement and the Bengal National College, but his brothers also avoided educational institutions under any direct or indirect control of the 'foreign' rulers and got themselves admitted into the National College. Both of them, Bejoy Kumar and Dharendra Kumar, were later sent to the U. S. A. for studying economics and chemistry respectively. Dharendra Kumar came to be associated with the Gadar (Revolutionary)

Party and suffered incarceration (Mukhopadhyay, P., 1979 : 15). Benoy Kumar's fourth brother, Khagendranath, studied in the Brahmacharyasrama at Santiniketan. Thus, the entire family of Sudhanya Kumar and Lavanyalata, the parents of Benoy Kumar, was nurtured in the ambience of Swadeshi Movement.

In tune with the Swadeshi spirit that laid a great stress on spiritualism and sacrifice of worldly desires, Sarkar roamed barefooted from one part of Bengal to another with the motto :

Valam, valam, Brahmalalam
Dhig valam, Kshatriyavalam.

That is, the spiritual strength is the only strength to be reckoned ; and the military prowess or strength for worldly achievements [i.e., the desire for achievements in mundane life] is to be spurned (*idem*). But once he came to notice the other stream in the cultural history of his country, i. e., the series of accomplishments by his countrymen in worldly life, he started harping on it with the same patriotic fervour and, this time, placed an identically exclusive stress on it. Because of his sociological awareness, Sarkar never lost sight of the synthesis of the transcendental and the worldly, the infinite and the finite, renunciation and enjoyment in the Hindu or Indian culture. But, he came to overemphasize the interests of the Hindus in mundane affairs, probably in order to compensate for the injury done unintentionally by him and deliberately by the foreign scholars and their native collaborators to his country's interests through an over accentuation of India's spirituality. His study of the *Sukraniti* is "really a study of Hindu Positivism, the human, secular and worldly elements in Hindu national life and culture, the place of earthly things, *Samsāra*, *Vāsanā*, *Bhoga*, desires, passions and attachments in the Hindu scheme of human existence—in short, a study of the *positive background and foundations of Hindu Sociology, as opposed to its transcendental foreground and superstructure*" (PBHS, 1914 : xv ; emphases added). He went to the extreme in announcing that "materia-

lism first, materialism second, and materialism always has been the foundation and the background of Hindu civilisation for six thousand years from the age of Mahenjo daro to the age of Ramakrishna—Vivekananda” (1937a : 635).

In the process Sarkar gradually came to discover the similarities of the Hindu culture and psyche with the western culture and mental make-up. The orientation of his studies in the later years of his life to macro-level generalisation, which at times, because of its neglect of the specificities of cultures, proved near-devastating for the very purpose of sociological exercise, was dictated by the necessity of demonstrating to his countrymen and their brethren in other Asian countries that they had no essential difference from the people in the west in potentialities for success in this world. The Asians had similar capacities to the western for acquiring the means for the attainment of this success. They were, in short, capable of economic development which was the desideratum for them at that hour. Through a reinterpretation of the Indian value system and social organisation continuing and changing through millennia, Sarkar sought to prove that there were no insurmountable impediments in the institutional complex of the Hindus that would obstruct their acceptance of the risks and challenges of new enterprises in the economic field. Neither would the innovations made by the advancement of science, technology and industry in the capitalist west prove difficult for them to absorb. These provided the model to be followed by the Asians, the captives of economic under-development (and poverty).

If one finds it difficult to fully share Mukhopadhyay's assessment of Benoy Kumar Sarkar “as the philosopher of India's capitalist development” (Mukhopadhyay, A K. 1979 : 230), one would undoubtedly agree that Sarkar very successfully represented the dominant currents of socio-economic thought of the enlightened and patriotic natives of the time. As Barun De succinctly puts it, “From 1853 to the early 20th century, India was in a stage of transition which represents the origin of nationalism—this nationalism was expressed,

one way, by the feeling among Indians, that they should become jointly prosperous, and this prosperity could be best gained by following the example of countries like Great Britain, Germany or Japan which had shown the way for economic progress by traversing the road to industrial capitalism" (1967 : 29). Sarkar's sociological analyses were informed by this feeling : they embodied "the desire of the new Indian middle classes in the early nineteenth century to move from ascriptive occupational categories to the ones based on their specialised inclinations and merits", out of which "there arose, not only the professionalisation of the middle class, but also a partial desire for entry into the field of enterprise and trade" (*ibid.* : 31). His severe criticism of the acceptance of the model of four varnas or castes with fixed barriers among them as the actual description of social stratification in ancient or mediaeval India, his repeated references to what he called social metabolism through the rise of lower orders into positions of power and wealth and downward mobility of the holders of power and property through different periods in Indian history, his colourful account of the enterprise of the Hindus, Buddhists and Moslems in India of the past in different areas, of their protests against the *status quo* whenever it proved oppressive or obstructive—all these were characterised by a search (or demonstration ?) of an analogue of the spirit of capitalism in the Hindu or Indian way of life. His analysis of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Shintoism in *Chinese Religion through Hindu Eyes* (1916[1975]) highlighted the secular bases of the ways of life of the Indians, Chinese and Japanese. It anticipated (Sarkar was not probably aware of the Weberian view at the time of writing it) and answered many of the charges of Max Weber regarding the other-worldliness, fixed social order, xenophobia and closed social systems and lack of communication of the Asian peoples. His attempts at discovering a pragmatic identity between the east and the west and his exhortations towards his countrymen, the Bengalis and others of India, for adopting a pragmatic approach so that they could best

utilize the world forces around them had the ultimate goal of sensitizing the Indians and other Asians to the rich possibilities that industrial capitalism promised and to their potentialities for realising those possibilities.

But Sarkar's analysis of the distant past was not matched by his analysis of the (then) recent past. He failed to see the reasons why the Bengali, for whom he very strongly desired success in the capitalist enterprise, did not achieve it. He did not recognise the fact that at the advent of the British power in India, "the two classes, the landlords and the literati, who formed the middle class, were not bourgeoisie of the West nor the Sethis of earlier India ..." (Mukerji, D. P., cited in Joshi 1986 : 1466). Sarkar who wanted to inspire the Bengali and other Indians of his own time with a spirit of enterprise with examples from the past history of India or Asia did not see that "between the commercial magnate who would venture out to the Indies, to Champa, Bali, Sumatra, and Ceylon, cross the mountains into Burma and China, who would finance the adventures of Kings, and fight them socially, if necessary, who could survive the loot of the Burgees and the dursharee of a couple of crores of tankhas to the Nawab or the Emperor, who could handle hundis with an all-India circulation—between such men, on the one hand, and the progenitors of the Ghoshes, Boses, Mitters, the Debs, the Lahas and the Bisaks, on the other, there was something more than a gulf. It was a chasm in social evolution. The sense of this vacuity overhangs Bengali culture and accounts for its dissociation with its Indian context.....A sociologist can only note the fact of the break in the Indian social process involved in the liquidation of the older middle-class and the creation of new land-owning and professional groups to consolidate foreign rule, and contrast it with the continuity in the rise of the industrial bourgeoisie in Europe out of its own feudal and commercial orders" (Mukerji, 1948 (1979) : 82). And, Sarkar did not quite succeed as a sociologist at least in this case. He appears to have only pontificated on the attainment of success by the Bengalis in capitalist entrepreneurship.

But he overlooked that while industrialisation came early to Bengal in the mill-building spurt of the 1830s, with its attendant development of banks, etc., the bank crash of 1846-47, as N. K. Sinha pointed out, not only scared away Bengali middle class investors from managerial or proprietary entrepreneurship but created in the minds of these investors a distrust of the British collaborators. In Bombay the spurt came later with the boom in exporting raw cotton to Lancashire. This came to a peak in the 1840s and 1850s but the speculation fever and crash of 1866 did not frighten the Bombay money market as much as the indigenous Calcutta money market had been scared in 1846-47 (N. K. Sinha, 1964, cited in De, 1967 : 32-33). "The learning process and the constant growth of ease in avoiding mistakes, was an important factor in the subsequent establishment of an industrial base in Bombay, compared with the relative occupational immobility of Bengalis, who found greater satisfaction in the more stable but far more limited occupations in professional office management" (De, 1967 : 33). Examining the peculiar problems of particular situations will thus give a better understanding of the socio-economic processes, including the development of capitalism or its obstruction. Sarkar's weakness in undermining the socio-cultural specificities has been repeatedly mentioned in this treatise. Of course, one may say that Sarkar belonging to an earlier age could not profit from the hindsight gained by the social scientists of a later age. And, his analysis of the values and norms of the Asians was a powerful and effective retort to those who would deny to the Indians or other Asians the prospect of economic development through rationality, initiative, industry and adaptability.

But was Sarkar an unwavering supporter of capitalism ? His criticism of "money-leaderocracy" or the disrespect of the bourgeoisie for the intellectuals and for many sterling human qualities raises doubts about it. To tell the truth, Sarkar highly valued social and economic justice and had a certain kind of regard for socialism as well. P.C.Joshi interpreted "DP's approach to Indian cultural tradition with its roots in '*Charai-*

beti Charaibeti' and '*Bahujan Hitay Bahujan Sukhay*' as a source of strength to Indian socialism" (Joshi, 1986 : 1464). Most interestingly, Sarkar described the Indian tradition in absolutely similar terms. To give only one example, Sarkar's observation in appreciation of Vivekananda's work may be cited here : "It is in Vivekananda's activism, the doctrine of creative reactions against the data of Nature and society that we see one of the latest illustrations of the Aitareya Brahmana (VII, 15) cult of *charaiveti* (march on).....It is the example of the sun (*suryasya pasya sremanam yo no tandrayate charan*), whose eternal movements inspired the Vedic philosophers to the doctrine of *charaiveti* or *Wanderlust*. In Vivekananda's declaration of war against the contemporary theories and in his call for an ideal which transcends the existing customs and breaks the 'bonds of Nature' we encounter once again the same age-long philosophy of mobility and vital dynamics....." (Sarkar, 1936 : 122-123). Further, "Vivekananda reminds Young Bengal of the story of Nachiketa in the Kathopanishad. 'I am superior to many,' said Nachiketa, as we are aware, 'I am inferior to few, but nowhere am I the last. I can also do something.' It is the religion of self-confidence in the interests of action that Vivekananda promulgates.....He energizes the humblest and the poorest to the creative enthusiasm of Nachiketa" (ibid. : 124).

The remarks above express the values which Sarkar cherished dearly. He sincerely desired the amelioration of the conditions of the poor masses of the country. And, he had a deep respect for them—for their potentialities and capacities. Many beliefs and opinions of Sarkar changed through time. But his faith in the dynamism of the Indian culture and the profound moral, intellectual and physical strength of the illiterate, poor and low-caste people as the basis of that culture remained unflagging till the last year of his life (cf. Sarkar, 1949 : 166-168). He had a great faith in the working class. The abolition of private profits was hailed by him as a remarkable discovery in the field of human values. At the same time he was a votary of freedom of the individual. Sarkar

would wait, if necessary, for generations for the realisation of the fusion of freedom with the abolition of private property. It may be that Sarkar's hope and his analysis of the factors promoting or hindering the fulfilment of this hope would appear interesting to the present day students of Indian polity and economy.

III

Sarkar's sociological analysis of the modern Indian culture and society is interesting for another reason. He eulogised the ancient and medieval culture of India. He discovered the similarity of cultures and the capacities of men in the east and the west and in the past as well as at present. He thus pointed out the strength and glory of the Indian tradition. But he probably recognised like the succeeding generations of Indians that "there is something compelling in the Western system of knowledge and its application seems to be very necessary for our very survival in the modern world." (Oommen, 1983 : 118). Sarkar referred to the amazing and infinite capacity of the Hindus for absorbing new civilisational waves and shocks of new cultures. But, probably, he was compelled to accept the fact that "The British were the first conquerors superior, and therefore, inaccessible to Hindu civilization" (Marx, 1853 in Marx & Engels, 1975 : 30). However proud he might have been of the Hindu tradition, he seemed to have been suffering from that "particular kind of melancholy" which was added by England to the misery of the Hindu who suffered "the loss of his old World, with no gain of a new." (Marx, June 1853—op. cit. : 14). He found Asia of the twenties to be a continent of slaves. "And to add insult to injury, the life which has of late been pulsating through Asian humanity and which has created for Japan a first class rank in the concert of world-powers, is due to the inspiration furnished mainly by Eur-America from Newton to Becquerel, from Washington and Rousseau to Mill and Treitschke. The inferiority of the Orient to the Occident in culture as well as in politics is thus from every side an estab-

blished fact of modern history" (Sarkar, 1922a : 5-6). There is no doubt about the "tragedy" when Sarkar is found to reiterate this point : "Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the American and the French thus had no precedent, ancient or mediaeval, to go by in the constitution of their republics. They were the first to break the ice. Not in a worse or more helpless condition is Asia placed today. Like the occidentals, Asians also cannot get any help from their own past tradition.[There are a] thousand and one influences that the East is imbibing from the West in modern times. This spiritual conquest of Asia by Eur-America from Washington and Adam Smith to Karl Marx and Lenin indicates, therefore, the absolute limit of the extreme claims that may be advanced on behalf of ancient Hindu achievements in politics" (*ibid.* : 154). The recognition of superiority of the west to the east is thus unmistakably present in Sarkar's writings, however tenaciously he might try to stick to the notion of Asian glory or that of "pragmatic identity" of the east and the west.

At the same time, nationalist as he was, Sarkar could not totally give up his pride as an Indian or Asian. He moved back and forth between 'tradition' of the East and the West representing 'modernity'. Probably, his entire generation was subjected to this wavering. Probably, that wavering still haunts the present generation of Indians and Asians. Though earlier in this treatise (*sup.* 74) Srinivas was cited for an explanation of the phenomenon, Sarkar himself provided a brief but insightful interpretation of it : "From Rammohun to Gandhi it is impossible to find any movement or institution of somewhat large size and substantial importance which is not Janus-like in its orientations, i.e., nationalist, traditionalist or revivalist on the one hand and at the same time internationalist, modernist and reformist on the other" (Sarkar, 1937 : 524). Sarkar's entire analysis aims at highlighting the possibility of man and society in India to adapt themselves to the changes that may occur in the modern world. But the source of this modernity is unfailingly or invariably the west. Sarkar failed to provide the Indians with any alternative goal. He championed

progress—and progress to him is an indefinite and indeterminate series. But at least in one sense it had a set direction—direction towards the west. At the same time the modern Indian would not and cannot give up his tradition. This dilemma of modern India is exemplified in Sarkar's works, his entire life. But it does not at all detract from his importance as a sociologist ; rather, it adds to that importance.

This work has raised many questions regarding the validity of many premises, methods, and inferences in Sarkar's socio-logical analyses. The treatise, however, has not shown any tendency of patricide. It only seeks to raise a controversy regarding the assessment of the contribution of Sarkar, a founding father of Indian sociology, and ends with a note of humility. For, it knows that its conclusions, tentative as they are, may be challenged by more knowledgeable, intelligent and discerning scholars. And, after all, it was the poet in Benoy Kumar Sarkar (1918bm : 22) who wrote

“Man that is man is bound to break,
And demolish barriers old ;
All human blood, no matter, whose,
Seeks to challenge the questions closed.”

POSTSCRIPT

SARKAR ON PROGRESS

An acute concern with the idea of progress of mankind in general and of the Indians in particular is evident in Sarkar's thought in sociology. An important reason is that the western thinkers since Hegel have propagated in a sustained manner the idea that the people of India were incapable of attaining progress and even of imagining it.

Hegel, for example, believed that the "History of the World travels from East to West, for Europe is absolutely the end of History, Asia the beginning. The History of World has an East *kat' exo chen*...for...History...has...a determinate East, viz., Asia. Here rises the outward physical Sun, and in the West it sinks down : here [i.e., in the West] spontaneously rises the Sun of self-consciousness, which diffuses a nobler brilliance. The History of the World is the discipline of the uncontrolled natural will, bringing it into obedience to a Universal principle and conferring subjective freedom" (1956 : 103-104). This ethnocentrism declaring in a shrill voice the area surrounding the Mediterranean to be the theatre for all history proved devastatingly discriminating against the quality of life of the Indians. Everything in Indian life—political consciousness and activities, social and religious customs, art and literature of the Indians—is presented by Hegel in the most unfavourable light. He found a ready-made basis for his judgement in the accounts of the English, which depicted the conditions of the Indians at the beginning of the rule of the East India Company as utterly corrupt and contemptible in order to prove the need for intervention by the English. "In India", spake Hegel, "the primary aspect of subjectivity—viz., that of the imagination—presents a union of the Natural and Spiritual, in which Nature on the one hand, does not present itself as a world embodying Reason, nor the Spiritual on the other

hand, as consciousness in contrast with Nature. Here the anti-thesis in the...principle is wanting. Freedom both as *abstract* will and as *subjective freedom* is wanting" (ibid. : 161). Contrasting the conditions of Persia with those of India, Hegel wrote, "The principle of separation of [Spirit] from Nature is found in the Persian Empire, which, therefore, occupies a higher grade than those worlds immersed in the Natural [e.g., China and India]...The Hindu kills himself—becomes absorbed in Brahm—undergoes a living death in the condition of perfect unconsciousness—or is a present god in virtue of his birth. Here we have no change ; no advance is admissible, for progress is only possible through the recognition of the independence of Spirit" (ibid. : 221).

All of the principal elements of Hegel's negative evaluation of India are repeated in Max Weber's pronouncements on India : The lack of individual freedom and scope of rational choice by individuals in awful presence of the over-arching caste system of the Hindus, emphasizing the ascribed statuses and iron law of caste rituals, the inability of the Hindus to attain and maintain political unity, the fact of their age-old belief in magical charms and blind superstitions, their incapacity for making any moral choice, their depravity, extreme lust and sensuality.

True, Weber's methodology precluded, at a conscious level, any discovery of universal laws of historical evolution or progress. "The use of the term 'progress' is legitimate in our disciplines when it refers to 'technical' problems', i.e., to the 'means' of attaining an unambiguously given end. It can never elevate itself into the sphere of 'ultimate' evaluations" (Weber, 1949 : 38). Even in this limited sense its use was, Weber thought, "very unfortunate" (ibid. : 39). His sceptical aversion to any philosophical element in empirical sciences forecloses any explicit construction of historical time in terms of cycles or unilinear evolution (cf. Weber's statement cited by Gerth and Mills, 1958 : 51). Gerth and Mills maintained nevertheless that a unilineal construction is clearly implied in Weber's idea of the "bureaucratic

"trend" or rationalization (1958 : 51). In comprehending and describing the change of human attitudes and mentalities, occasioned by the process of secular rationalization (a notion which enjoys a central place in Weber's philosophy of history), Weber liked to quote Friedrich Schiller's phrase, the "disenchantment of the world". The degree and orientation of 'rationalization' is thus assessed negatively in terms of the measure to which magical elements of thought are displaced, or positively by the extent to which ideas gain in systematic coherence and naturalistic consistency. This view of 'disenchantment' embodies an element of liberalism and of the enlightenment philosophy that construed man's history as a unilinear 'progress' towards moral perfection (sublimation), or towards cumulative technological rationalization.

Weber did have, as Wager also argues, a comprehensive conception of the development of western culture, on which, though, he passed a generally unsavourable judgement. He called attention to the sharp contrast between the traditional social order and the increasingly rationalized society of the modern west, with its efficiency, organization and discipline, a society that had experienced *Entzauberung*, by which he meant conversion from supernaturalism to secularism (*entzaubern*, v. '... (of magician) break the (magic) spell of, free from charm or magic spell—Cassell's German Dictionary, 1978). Though as man he feared that rationalization might in its experiments destroy personal freedom and idealism in public life, as an academician he approved this process, since, *Entzauberung* had made possible the achievements of modern science and scholarship.

And, India served as, what Munshi (1988 : 28) calls, *an ideal negative type* in the analysis of the above process. The Indians are assumed to be not only lacking the economic rationalism of capitalism of the west and rational ethic of ascetic protestantism but thoroughly immersed and irretrievably caught in magic as well as utter indifference to the world and worldly achievements. Add to this Max Mueller's

typification of the Indians as essentially spiritual and and other-worldly, which irked Sarkar to his marrow.

This tradition of modernity in western scholarship is nurtured with care in the textbooks in sociology. Bottomore thus writes : "It is not to be expected that the ideas of [change, development, progress]...should have had their counterparts in the social thought of India or *other* developing countries. In India there were neither intellectual nor social conditions favourable to the appearance of theories of change, evolution or progress. Indian society itself constituted by the predominant groups of caste, joint family and village community, was relatively static before the period of British rule introduced Western technology and western conception of progress. At the same time Hinduism propounded an idea which withdrew men's attention from material improvement at the same time as it sanctioned and justified the established social order. Indian culture.....has been essentially religious and other-worldly in its orientations. Moreover.....we may agree with Bury that the doctrine of progress could not arise so long as the religious doctrine of Providence was in the ascendant, and even go further in suggesting that theories of progress and development could only become influential in societies where religious doctrines in general were challenged and where the secularization of social life was already advanced. Such conditions have only begun to emerge in India in very recent times.....secular thought was for long represented by the foreign rulers of the society" (1971 : 291 ; parenthesis and emphasis added).

Sarkar discoursed on progress to offer a strong rebuttal of the aforementioned charges against the Indians, nay, Asians, and their tradition. He seems to have applied what Leo Tolstoy termed "the law of 'retrospectiveness' ", which makes all the past appear a preparation for events that occur subsequently" (Tolstoy, 1972 : 843), in order to counteract the perversity in its application by the western scholars who painted the Indian tradition in dull colours through an extrapolation in the reverse direction from the miserable condition of the Indians

under the colonial rule to prove the sterility of that tradition to produce forces of mobility, rationality and progress. He claimed that the contribution of the Indians to the making of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was in no way mean. And, his scanning of the history of India in ancient and medieval times revealed to him that the “‘modern’ trends in India’s creations,—both at home and abroad,—are but to be organically linked up with her previous achievements in arts, science, law, polity and what not. *The traditional cults of Saktiyoga (energism) [sic.], charaiveti (march on) and digvijaya (conquest of the quarters)…are responsible for these creations of today*……(1937 : 10 ; emphases added). In order to spotlight the specificity of Indian culture the western scholars have really followed a certain kind of uniformitarianism in terms of both space and time. India, China, Japan, etc., are placed together and treated alike in complete disregard of the differences among them in order to contrast their culture and ideology (not cultures and ideologies) with *that* of the West (the countries of which are treated as homogeneous with one another). Thus, though Louis Dumont does not assert that India and China are not dissimilar, he is nonetheless convinced that “There is no doubt that traditional Chinese, Japanese and Indian ideologies are holistic while ours is individualistic” (1977 : 9). In this analysis by Dumont and his fellow-trailers temporal differences also get equally blurred. India (or the East) represents a timeless structure and the dynamism, mobility and speed, the supposed hallmark of the modern West, are presented as the eternal virtues of the westerners. Holistic, traditional, stationary or static East are thus counterposed with individualistic, modern, dynamic or progressive West. Sarkar’s theory of progress with its overemphasis on uniformity of the Orient and the Occident, of the past and the present seems to be an effort to defeat the western writers at their own game.

J. B. Bury provided probably the best short definition of Progress : the “idea” that “civilization has moved, is moving, and will move in a desirable direction” (1955 : 2). Morris

Ginsberg retains it in his essay on progress (1968 (originally, 1952) : 121), and much the same definition recurs in John Baillie's *The Belief in Progress*. Ginsberg agrees with Bury's (op. cit. : 5) stress on the incongruity between the faith in Providence and belief in progress. But he differs from Bury in that he maintains the criteria of what is desirable must be "rational" : "...equality and freedom are ideals which can be rationally defended and that progress consists in the movement towards them" (Ginsberg, 1968 : 120). For Bury the goal of progress is general happiness, for Baillie it is "wisdom, happiness and goodness". Thus different writers on progress have expressed vastly different views on a large number of significant issues. Wagar provides a fairly workable definition of progress. A belief in progress means "a view of history or evolution that traces *general improvement*, by whatever idea of the good and by whatever agency, *in the temporal life of mankind, extending from the past into the predictable or at least possible future*" (1972 : 6 ; emphases added).

A survey of the history of society and culture in India even of ancient times will, according to Sarkar, show the deep concern of the Hindu sages and seers with the general improvement in the temporal life of the people, and not a sheer obsession on their part with the prospects of men and women in the other world. The "Yugantara theory of progress" in the *Gita* is a cyclical theory of progress which envisions the defeat of evil and corruption and of the miscreants indulging in them and the triumph of good and fairness and of the honest upholding them *on this earth*, through, of course, the intervention of God in His different incarnations (Sarkar, 1941 : 499—501). One gets a "melioristic, creative, futuristic, evolutionary" message also in the famous prayer in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishat* (I, iii, 21) of the Hindus where man pleads with God : Asato ma sadgamaya/Tamaso ma jyotirgamaya/Mrityor-mamritamgamaya (Lead me from the unreal to the real/Lead me from darkness to light/Lead me from death to immortality). It expresses a yearning which is "thoroughly rational, secular and human. It is bathed in an atmosphere of posi-

tivism and optimistic joy. Besides ..it calls upon human beings to rise to the dignity of manhood and conduct the eternal war against evil" (Sarkar, op. c.t. : 541). The idea of progress was, therefore, not totally unfamiliar to the Hindus though the two theories mentioned above appealed to Sarkar vulnerable to criticism because of their inclusion of an element of finality : the final victory of good over evil.

The western critics would, however, hardly accept the above as theories of progress or even of social change proper because of their reliance on Providence or God. Sarkar would not feel deterred. He would instantaneously advance the instance of the workaholics who composed the Vedas and who were admired in the Vedas. "The Vedas held the mirror up to the social life of the time and what was it but the life of fighters and colonizers ?" (1937 : 303). The essential motif of the hymns, prayers and sermons is secular. The Rig Veda is a piece of allegorical poetry singing the saga of men's quest of fire and their struggle for harnessing the same to human needs (Rig. I, 65, 6J, 98). "A prosperous territory, and a happy home, success over the enemy and expansion of dominions,—this is what the Hindus wanted in the Vedic age. Their literature portrays, therefore, the worldly interests of men and women. We read in it songs in praise of grain and soma drink , it is pervaded by the spirit of carnivals, merrymakings, and Theocritean pastorals, it is the poetry of hearty send-offs to the soldiers going to the front, or of war-chants in honour of triumphant generals 'at home'. We read in it, further, of the romantic love between the damsel Urvasi and Pururavas (Rig. X). The Vedic woman is made of the same flesh and blood as the modern woman. And we see her shifts to win and fix a man's love against a rival (Atharva VII, 38, 113)" (Sarkar 1937 : 304).

The famous declaration of Purusha in the Atharva Veda to conquer everything that comes in his way (Ahamasmi Sahamana etc., see sup. 398) is nothing but a call, put though in a religious garb, to the ambitious and valorous to prove their mettle on this earthly earth through conquest and control

of every new forces of nature, regions and peoples. It would be a forced interpretation to explain Vedic adjuration to move on (*Charaiveti*—Aitareya Brahmana), to work and wander ceaselessly (*nana-srantaya srirasti*—there is no prosperity without movement or mobility, or *papo nrisadvare jono Indra iccharatah sakha*—evil is who stayeth among men and Indra is commander of the wander) as a mere quest for salvation in after life. All this is but an articulation by the Hindus of life's urges for continual expansion, mobility, newer experiences, rich, prosperous and enjoyable earthly existence. The history of the Indian people is replete with instances of their attempts at fulfilment of these urges in the rise of new dynasties, emergence of new kingdoms, the victories and triumphs of the heroes, creations of the litterateurs, artists, painters and sculptors, experts in dance and music. It is less than just to emphasize only the idea of *Nirvana* in Buddhism and to ignore totally the will to live through constant struggle against odds and evils in the idea of “*appamada* (vigilance, earnestness, strenuousness) or energism” in the pedagogy of Sakya (1937 : 29). Like many others of his time Sarkar wrongly equated the *elan vital* of Bergson with “the titanic drive which impelled Western civilization toward shores yet unexplored” (cf. Masur, 1961 : 263-64). The Bergsonian *elan vital* (understood in the aforementioned sense), the urge of life, l' impulsion vitale (as talked of by Espinas), which creates stir and turmoil in the individuals, which sets the forces of social metabolism in motion and which has, according to Sarkar, characterized the way of life of the Indians through millennia is the cardinal element of Sarkar's thesis on progress.

Bergson talked of the “Creative Evolution”. Joseph Schumpeter, writes Fallows (1990 : 10), used the expression “creative destruction” to focus on the continual motion underlying capitalism and its constant challenge to and its continuous supersession of order and tradition. Something akin to this quality which Schumpeter would reserve for capitalism was found by Sarkar to have characterized the

human civilization all through. The most distinctive attribute of progress of the entire humanity has been, according to Sarkar, "creative disequilibrium". No stage of the human psyche and of the existence of man on earth can be imagined as one of harmony, concord or equilibrium. "At every stage of organised life or culture, nay at every moment of individual existence man is the theatre of polarities" of *sat* (reality) and *asat* (unreality), *avidya* (ignorance) and *vidya* (knowledge), good and evil. "The tug-of-war is eternal" (Sarkar, 1941 : 521).

Sarkar's thesis on progress remained closely linked with his notion of human personality and culture in general and with the culture and personality of the Hindus in particular, which underwent significant changes from one period of his life to another. His reaction to the image of other-worldly Hindus, assiduously constructed by the occidental thinkers, was initially somewhat moderate. He did not then underplay that the Hindus sought moksha or salvation but this quest for salvation was, according to him, balanced by a desire for the enjoyment of the pleasures of life on this earthly earth and manifold activities prompted by that desire. "The literature, fine arts, religious consciousness, industrial life, political organisation, educational system, social economy of the Hindus—all have sought to realise this synthesis and harmony between the eternal antitheses and polarities of the universe: the worldly and other-worldly, the positive and the transcendental, the many and the one, the Form and Spirit, Culture and Faith. Science and Religion, Caste disunions and Vedantic Oneness, Image-worship and the realisation of the Infinite (Brahma)" (PBHS 1914 : xi).

But both these elements of spirituality or search of salvation and effort to attain harmony which were considered important features of the 'Hindu' personality paled into insignificance in the later writings of Sarkar. He, first, preferred to keep silent on the other-worldliness, whatever might be its degree, of the Hindus and, secondly, ruled out the possibility of realising harmony by human personality at any time, in any

place, with respect to any subject or matter. Thus, while another Indian sociologist, responding to the "irresistible appeal" of the Upanishads for realising "Shantam, Shivam and Advaitam" in life, holds that progress "ultimately depends on the development of personality by a conscious realization of the principle of Harmony, Welfare and Unity" (Mukherjee, 1932 : 25-26), Sarkar was alarmed to note the stubbornness of the scholars of the west in projecting pacifism, quietism, other-worldliness of the Hindu character. These virtues were the polar opposites of aggressiveness, activism and worldliness of the western people who dominated the world in modern times and claimed, therefore, the exclusive title to progress. And, as D. P. rightly points out, if progress "is national or racial, it is easy for a powerful nation or race to justify the exploitation of less powerful groups on the ground that such exploitation advances the cause of progress (To enact anti-immigration laws becomes, incidentally, a moral duty)" (*ibid.* : 6 ; cf. sup. 119-122). To throw overboard the theses of "dominant culture traits" (Sarkar, 1941 : 25), "dichotomy psychologies" (*ibid.* : 23) which would suggest the contrareity of unchanging and otherworldly Hindu mind and dynamic and worldly Western psyche, Sarkar came to emphasize the "pluralistic make-up of the mind or personality" (*ibid.* : 25) as well as the pluralistic nature of culture. "No individual can then be postulated to be by nature mild, loving, friendly or by nature cruel, hateful, inimical. The collectivities also cannot be instinctively one or the other. They are by nature capable of mercy as of violence" (*ibid.* ; 82). There is no distinction between the East and the West in the matter. In order to further stress the similarity of the Indians or Asians and their western counterparts in terms of continuous human efforts towards progress through intense activism and never-ceasing desire and ability to grapple with problems of human existence on earth, Sarkar still later banished the tendency or efforts towards harmony from the list of elements constituting personality.

"The complete personality", Sarkar wrote, "as a normal phenomenon, cannot be taken as a one-sided entity....[I] believe in the normal mental *Gestalt* as the complex of more than one category, instinct, intuition, intellect, reason, logic, Wessenwille, Kürwille, emotion, passion, unreason, irrationality, pre-logic, pre-religion, and what not functioning simultaneously" (*ibid.* : 24-25). Human personality, all the world over and in all ages, is spurred to ceaseless activity by the desire for gratification of the urges for Kama (sex), Kanchana (wealth), Kirti (domination) and Karma (creativity) (*ibid.* : 72-83 ; see sup. 339). The absence of any specific reference to the quest for harmony or tranquility or yearning for the transcendental from this conception of personality is noteworthy (cf., however, sup. 339).

There is no room for harmony or equipoise or rest, even momentarily, in the creative disequilibrium of human personality in its striving, to remove the hindrances or evil obstructing the realisation of what it wants since the idea of what is satisfying keeps on changing and evil is never removed from the scene. In the eternal war between good and evil in man "no ultimate evil finally overpowers the good, and no ultimate good finally overpowers the evil." The disequilibrium externally featuring in the personality of the individual is naturally carried over to "intermental processes and inter human relations", i. e., to the arena of culture and society. "Evil changes its forms and so also does good. The disequilibrium, likewise, appears constantly in new guises. The remakings of the individual personality and the societal transformations are but different movements of disequilibrium from point to point...It is the different positions, stages or forms of disequilibrium in motion that constitute progress" (*ibid.* : 521 : emphases added). Progress thus involves changes in forms only. *It is axiologically neutral and it appears as an ever-ascending spiral.* Progress consists in the fact that "at every stage there is a deliberate and conscious conflict between what for the time being is supposed to be good and what is supposed to be bad and that it is as a result of this conflict that

the next stage makes its appearance. There is the play of creative intelligence of and will of man at every stage. It is the operation of this intelligence and will that renders each stage of operations moral or spiritual. Hence *the subsequent stage is to be taken as representing a progress*" (ibid. : 525 ; emphases added).

Progress or "transformations, position changes or form-remakings" is/are dialectical in nature. "No dwanda (conflict), no progress" (ibid. : 522). Something like the Hegelian-Marxist dialectic sans the alleged vision of finality and monistic determinism (of idea or spirit for Hegel and of matter for Marx) marks creative disequilibrium or progress. The Hegelian dialectic of thesis, antithesis and synthesis is described by Sarkar through the following formula : 1.A, Not-A, B. \rightarrow 2.B, Not-B,C. \rightarrow 3.C, Not-C, D. \rightarrow 4.D, Not-D, - The formula of Sarkar's Creative Disequilibrium would be : 1. A¹, Not-A¹ \rightarrow 2. A², Not-A² \rightarrow 3. A³, Not-A³ \rightarrow 4 A⁴, Not-A⁴ \rightarrow . The Hegelian dialectic, seems to Sarkar to envisage a momentary pause, a statical condition in the stage of synthesis. But Sarkar's 'creative disequilibrium' does not admit of a statical condition even for a moment. The conflict between A¹ and Not-A¹ does not give rise to any synthesis in A². A² is the altered form of A¹ as not -A¹ is the changed form of not -A¹.

The notion of never-perishing evil in progress propelled by creative disequilibrium should not lead to fatalism or cynicism. The presence of evil in ever-new forms is a challenge to the human capacity and intelligence which is engaged in a continuous struggle with the variegated forms of evil. Indeed, progress through creative disequilibrium is not a mechanical series of rational-irrational, dharma-adharma or good-evil 'complexes' automatically following a course of successions. Nor is it caused by Providence. At every stage of progress there is the play of intelligence, emotion and will of man. The choice of goals as well as of means is made by self-determined individuals, by the moral personality. "As a rational or moral person the creative

individual's function is to choose and reject" (*ibid.* : 539). The element of rationality as an element of progress is thus admitted by Sarkar. But what is rational becomes extremely relative in the following statement. "The good, the ideal, the *sat*, the *rational* etc. that is *pragmatically* pounced upon by creative man as the best, the greatest or the highest may change from situation to situation" (*ibid.* : 525).

With the aid of the notion of "relativity" of criteria for judging what is rational Sarkar succeeds in demonstrating the ubiquity, antiquity as also continuity of progress through the human history. It is not then true that the ancient were not progressive or the oriental were not progressive. Progress is not the characteristic feature of the modern and of the western only, it has been the property of humanity since the dawn of human civilization and will remain so in future. "Man is perfectible, i.e., capable of improvement but not capable of perfection." Hence the road to progress is open and no nation can pontificate on what will be the last term in progress. *Indeed, progress is only temporal, it has got no spatial or racial character*; what is subsequent in point of time is a step forward from what obtained at the preceding moment. And, there is no sliding back, no going back to square one again in the annals of human progress. "Virtually everything human is continuous, although not without breaks, gaps, digressions, deviations or setbacks" (Sarkar, 1943 : 9). Despite his reluctant admission of gaps or setbacks, Sarkar remained an inveterate believer in the perpetuity of progress. Progress is thus abstract, formal, universal but multilinear, i.e., subject to endless variations in response to varying preferences of races, continuous, spiralling and indeterminate.

But this notion of progress came to be substituted by a view where progress is rectilinear and admits of a somewhat concretely defined goal, viz., development of science and technology and increasing deployment of the same for greater and greater material prosperity. The only common element

between the two is the idea of perfectibility of human personality and its milieu.

Sarkar had to reckon with the spectacular achievements of the west in science and industry and the industrial backwardness of the Asian countries. The goal of scientific, technological and scientific advancement must be emphasized for the countries lagging behind the industrially advanced nations. But the difference between the East and the West in scientific and industrial achievement should in no way be interpreted as an indicator of any fundamental difference between the two "in ideals or outlook on life"; it is but a difference in "the grade or degree of remaking of man. An objective measure is furnished by achievements of technology" (1936 : 78) or, as Sarkar would, in his own, novel way, put it, technocracy. Technocracy "may be roughly taken as equivalent to the applications of science, say, of mechanical, electrical and chemical engineering to material life or the creation of utilities" (1943 : 5). It is only when "*the arts or methods of production, transportation, marketing etc. are more or less transformed on account of the application of these discoveries and inventions to material life that an industrial and economic revolution worth the name is consummated*" (*ibid.* ; 12; emphases added). The East must achieve it so that it can claim to be on a par with the West.

Sarkar is, however, wary about "guarding ourselves against the monistic economic determinism of Karl Marx" (*ibid.* : 18). He would highlight the triumph of spirit or power of man in achieving progress even in the material plane. Every "inter human activity (family, economy, polity, culture) is spiritual, in so far as each registers the conquest of matter, nature and the world by the spirit or power of man. Culture (or civilization), i. e., creativity *per se* is spiritual as a matter of course. It is impossible to think of anything created by man which is unspiritual" (1941 : 82). His deep admiration for the spectacular achievements of the western man in science and industry led him to observe almost in the same breath that tool-making and related activities were the most note-

worthy of the first achievements of the spirit of man. "Perhaps the very first or one of the first manifestations of man's spirituality, soul-force or the like consisted in the invention and application of tools, instruments and machines" (1943 : 6). The ability for invention and continuous improvements of tools and implements was traced back to the paleolithic stage. Although "the spirit or soul of man was materialistic and inventive in all the races" of the by-gone millennia, there were the differences in degrees or grades between them not only in different epochs of evolution but in the same epoch as well. But these differences in the degrees of achievement of progress, i. e., advancement in inventing new tools, implements, *technes* and techniques between one group of people and another were not attributable to any basic, inherent, racial superiority of either group to the other. "In the place of the traditional ideas regarding racial and geographical differences in the so-called types of culture we are presented with differences or distances, i. e., 'lags' in time only. The fundamental features of World-economy, pragmatically considered are found to be the same in the different peoples. It is only proceeding step by step or rather stage by stage from epoch to epoch: the differences between the peoples are in the main but differences in the stage or epoch. The equations that can be established reveal but the distinctions between earlier and later, go-ahead and backward peoples. *The same economico-technocratic features are appearing today in one race or region, tomorrow in a second, and the day after tomorrow in a third*" (ibid. : 13 ; emphasis added). Rectilinearity of human progress or economic and technological advancement is thus quite evident. Also, every people, however backward it may be industrially and technologically, will find a message of hope, an assurance, in this version of progress. Since the economic techniques and industrial technologies mastered by one race today would inevitably appear in all countries, they will occur in its life also. The question is only one of time or of backwardness and advancement in point of time. To measure the extent of lag of a backward country

and the degree of advancement of a go-ahead nation at a particular point of time, Sarkar put forward his scheme of "equation of world-economy". By applying such "economo-technocratic" and socio-economic indices as per-capita and per-square mile values created by respective peoples it is possible to detect "three orders of parity, identity or equation existing between different regions, races and nations of the world, namely the following :

1. A (1940)=XB (1940)
2. A (1940)=XA (1905)
3. A (1940)= B (1905)" (*ibid.* : 4).

The first equation suggests that in 1940 region A is X times region B. "This is to be understood item by item" (*ibid.* : 5). The second equation indicates that region A is X times the same region in 1905. The region in question has moved ahead or gone down in economic indices. According to the third equation, region A in 1940 attains parity with region B as it was in 1905. That is, A is lagging behind B by 35 years in economic "creativities".

The lodestar of progress is located in the western hemisphere. Considering Asia as a whole one may conclude that "the economic endeavours in the different regions of the Orient are mainly but repetitions of modern Eur-American developments in their early stages" (*ibid.* : 14). It is illustrated in the following "economo-technocratic" equations worked out by Sarkar :

- "(1) New Asia (c. 1880—1890)=modern; Eur-America (c. 1785—1830)
- (2) Young India (c. 1935—1240)=Eur-America (c. 1848—70," (*idem*).

It appeared to Sarkar in 1943 that the modern East was about two generations behind the modern West in technocracy and socio-economic achievement. "*In the birth of New Asia one force has been contact with and example of modern Western progress*" (*ibid.* : 15 ; emphasis added). The second force consists in the cultivation of science and industrialization, however slow and faltering it may have been. Anti-

pathy to foreign domination, intervention or concession has proved to be the third important force in the making of New Asia. Closely allied with it is the inspiration derived from the economic, political and cultural achievements in ancient and medieval Asia, which has been another "formative force" in the New Orient. This is why Sarkar repeatedly looked back for the comforting assurance that there had been "parallels" of the challenges faced by men and women of the modern world as also of their successes in meeting them in the past history of the Indians and other Asians. This "romantic" appreciation of the past is intimately connected with *modern* historical, archaeological and anthropological scholarship. "Nationalism, in so far as it is an aspect of romanticism, is thus ultimately to be traced, therefore, in the main to Western education. This began to bear fruit among the pioneers of the new life and thought in Asia between 1850 and 1886 and has been more or less democratized filtering down to the masses since then" (*ibid.* : 15-16). The direction for progress of India (or Asia) was thus towards the West and the leadership of the West in this process appeared convincing.

It was, of course, not denied by Sarkar that the foreign rulers from the west created and would create serious impediments to industrial development and economic growth of the countries subjugated by them. Theoretically, it might not be impossible for the laggard Asia and other under-developed regions to remove or reduce the lag and catch up with the go-ahead of the west. But the "economic reality" or the reality of economic transformation in India, Burma, Indonesia, Indo-China, etc., was "that of increment in lags or regression by the Anglo-German standard" (*ibid.* : 93). The role of foreign rule in the economics of a dependency was considerably responsible for it. Foreign rule is substantially, if not wholly, responsible for poverty, medieval survivals, insanitary conditions, scientific and technocratic lags and cultural backwardness of the politically subjugated peoples. "In an objective and unsentimental analysis of world economy the war against

poverty, low expectation of life, techno-industrial lags, semi-primitive agriculture, as well as underdevelopment in capitalism and socialism becomes for a subject race, then, in a large measure,...a war against foreign rule. Those economists who are not politicians by profession or imperialists by interest are invited to discuss these aspects of the world economy in a dispassionate and scientific manner" (*ibid.* : 95).

A fine specimen of this incisive and dispassionate scholarship was provided by Sarkar himself, when he saw through not only the then Anglo-American plan or plans for multi-lateral contacts, reduced tariffs and international currency but also (and here is another example of the fact that Sarkar was far from a blind supporter of fascism or Nazism) Hitler's *Europäische Neuordnung* under German commercial and monetary domination. Apparently directed against each other, both had one common objective. "This is, first, the expansion of markets for the goods of industrial powers, and secondly, the perpetuation of the agrarian character of the backward and politically subject regions" (*idem*). Both of them aimed at resisting large scale techno-industrial developments in dependencies and other backward regions. The highest they would concede to the laggard, the colonies and dependencies, in the latter's efforts towards industrialization was "the production of consumption goods by modern machinistic methods. But they are opposed to the manufacture of machineries, tools, implements, *Produktionsmittel*, investment goods etc. by the backwards, colonies and dependencies" (*ibid.* : 96). The industrially advanced nations of the west wanted to keep the backward, i. e., the peoples of "India, Burma, Indonesia, Indo-China and Phillipines" on the one hand and those of the "Balkan complex, Eastern Europe and Latin America" on the other hopelessly down as hewers of wood and drawers of water to the American, British, German and other industrial empires for a rather lengthened period. The economists and policy-makers of "free and liberal" Euro-America did not seem to have any greater respect than what the collaborators with the Axis powers showed for the essentially human

ideals and aspirations of the subject races and backward peoples. For, the "danger to Eur-American world-domination is suspected by them as lying in the emergence of an industrialized Asia as of an industrialized Africa and an industrialized Latin America" (*ibid.* : 97). Countries like India or China could not expect any genuine cooperation from the Anglo-American financiers or War-strategists except to the extent that these industrially underdeveloped regions "can be somewhat efficiently used for the purpose of expanding the horizon of British or American world-domination" (*ibid.* : 109).

This stark reality must not, Sarkar said emphatically, breed a note of despair in the hearts of the Asians including the Indians. The Indians or the Chinese should try to fully utilize whatever England and the U.S. A. considered "it expedient to place at the disposal of semi-modern laggards" (*ibid.* : 109). The shrewd businessmen and entrepreneurs of India would have to utilize the viswa-shakti (world forces) generated by war-economy for promoting industrialization in the country. And, Sarkar's reading of the situation suggested that England, America and western Europe "are now compelled to promote this industrialization in their own interest" (*ibid.* : 106).

Sarkar's advocacy of the path of industrialization as it happened in the west was prompted by his optimism which emerged from his notion of the rectilinear course of progress which seemed to have an inexorable quality. "Whatever has happened in the economic sphere in Eur-America during the past half-century is tending also to happen more or less on similar and even identical lines in Asia and, of course, in India during the next generations or two" (*ibid.* : 67). Since the present level of industrial and technological advancement in the West was achieved through stages, it would be an idle dream for the Indians to hope to achieve that in the immediate future. They would rather have to envisage and hasten the realization of the next higher stages in technical progress as well as capitalism and socialism. As to the aspect of inevitability of the western

or capitalist path of progress, Sarkar wrote, "We are convinced that it is almost impossible to find anything new in Soviet Russia.....in addition to those concrete items with which the 'adult' regions have made the world familiar during the previous two or three generations. And as for the countries of 'infant' modernism...they also wou'd perhaps find hardly any new processes or forms of interhuman relations in addition to those to which they themselves have been getting acculturated although not in as big doses as Soviet Russia. *The processes and patterns of economic transformation, progress or metabolism are universal, human and uniform*" (ibid. : 50 ; emphasis added).

Sarkar deplored that he had not been in Soviet Russia and did not know the Russian language. He, therefore, had to depend on Anglo-American and Franco-German propaganda for his evaluation of the Russian condition, which might prove to be misleading (ibid. : 149). Sarkar's initial euphoria regarding the Bolshevik experiment' in socio-economic transformation (see sup.110) subsided in the forties. But even then he unequivocally praised the efforts of post-Revolution Russia to upgrade the down-trodden and to ensure distributive justice on a grand scale (1943 : 159—167). He was, however, of the opinion that whatever economic achievements were made in the U S. S. R. resulted from the efforts of the Russians to realize the model of economic prosperity through industrial and technological advancement set by the industrially developed, capitalist West. To him the Stalinist communism in Russia was nothing but "state-capitalism", when the Anglo-American world pursued "private capitalism" (ibid. . iv, 177). Like Japan following the capitalist path Soviet Russia also was in her initial years characterized by a relatively great urge for industrialization and acquisition of technical equipment and the corresponding indifference to the level and quality of consumption available for the citizens. In mechanized agriculture, "the highest grade of agriculture" American achievements were too much even for Anglo-German giants. "There are more affinities between Soviet Russia and the

U. S. A. than between her and Germany. Naturally, therefore, she has been following the American example" (*ibid.* : 254). And, the increase in production of tractors from 1400 to 116,000 in nine years (1928-36) was a gigantic leap. These statements of Sarkar can hardly be dismissed as bizarre when one learns the following resolve of Stalin : "We are forging full speed ahead along the road of industrialization which leads to socialism, we are leaving behind us our age-old backward 'Russian' past...and when we motorize the USSR and put the muzbik on a tractor, then let them try to catch us up, those respectable capitalists with their much-vaunted civilization. We shall see then which is the backward country, and which the developed" (cited in Lewin, 1968 : 456). The capitalists emerge, in the statement, as the reference group for Stalin albeit his anger against them.

The series of assassination, massacres, pogroms, the totalitarian Bolshevik blood bath, liquidation not only of private capital but of private capitalists, manifestation of inequality in income, differential wages and piece-work rates and several other non-communistic and bourgeois or traditional traits would, Sarkar felt, diminish the attraction of the Soviet model for the underdeveloped regions of the world (*op. cit.* : 262-263). The world economy would proceed haltingly and limpingly more or less along the traditional, laissez faire, and non-communistic, "although somewhat state-socialistic", and nationalistic channels (*ibid.* : 263).

Economic-technocratic modernization after the model of Euro-America appeared to Sarkar, a member of a politically subjugated and industrially underdeveloped nationality, the only road to progress. He deemed it futile to declare the specificity of Asia, even of India. Did he know beforehand that a day would come when the Americans (Fallows, 1990) would pride themselves on the American talent for disorder closely allied with the creative destruction of American capitalism and confidently argue that the United States could not and should not try to mimic the Japanese talent for order ? Did he foresee that precisely at that time Japan would

experience an increasing labour mobility, with large numbers of workers changing jobs each year, apparently to pursue vocations of their choice and not be tied down to one place out of a "mistaken notion of loyalty" (*The Statesman*, 1990) ? The idea of inexorably triumphant march of the western, capitalist, industrial civilization probably became dominant in his mind and lay behind his uniformitarian stand that would find no dissimilarity between the East and the West. He would at the most have accepted that "East plus West is much the best" (Iyer, 1920 : 207). His uniformitarianism did not blind Sarkar to the fact that in techno-economic development "Asia is not one or uniform. There are many Asias" (1943 : 16). It brought out an important fact which the western thinkers deliberately or unknowingly tended to suppress : "In Eur-America also, techno-economically, there is no unity or uniformity. *The developments are diverse and point to different stages of growth. There are many Europes and many Americas even today*" (ibid. : 16-17 ; emphasis added). Sarkar's uniformitarianism, which appears to be Dumont and Pocok's and this author's *bete noire*, served to throw light on that aspect of the task of comparison which "reveal[s] differences where sameness was assumed and sameness where difference was taken for granted" (Beteille, 1983 : 43).

In the Kingsley Martin Memorial Lecture of 1979, André Béteille has tried to expose how Louis Dumont's over-emphasis on the specificities of the *homo hierarchicus* of India (Dumont, 1972) and the *homo equalis* of the west conveniently ignores the hierarchical character of medieval European society and gives the impression of an unchanging structure of the history of or, rather, ahistorical character of the Indian society and a changing and dynamic nature of the Western society which only holds the key to modernity and modernism. There is a very strong resemblance between Beteille's critique of Dumont's and Sarkar's criticism in 1921 of the views of western thinkers of his time. Sarkar virulently attacked "the paste-board character" of the labels used by the western thinkers of the late nineteenth century to

present the ever-changing West as opposed to the unchanging East, Western materialism and worldliness as distinguished from Eastern religiosity and other-worldliness, Western Individualism as contrasted with Holism of Eastern Societies, the democratic West as opposed to the despotic or hierarchical East. Within the imperialist order this sort of argument in terms of antinomies of the East and the West had a political function "which it would be disingenuous to overlook : to assert that Indians are unalterably hierarchical [and other-worldly] is also to maintain that in the modern world they are less than fit for self-governance" (Beteille, op. cit., 52; parenthesis added, following Sarkar ; cf. Sarkar, 1922 F. Y. A. and supra 164-172). Sarkar's sociology of uniformitarianism, whatever criticism might be made of it, alerted us, the people of India, as well as the inhabitants of the other countries of the East or the third world, to this design of the colonial and imperial forces. It simultaneously tried to brace the sagging morale of the victims of the sinister propaganda of the westerner that aimed at keeping the East, or the third world, in general, in a state of perpetual dependency—psychological as well as material—on them. Sarkar's views are, therefore, worthy of attention of the students of sociology and anthropology even today.